

# THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION IS RESERVED.]

[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 870.—VOL. XXXIV.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JANUARY 3, 1880.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[DIANA'S RESOLVE.]

## ROB ROY MACGREGOR;

OR,

## THE HIGHLAND CHIEFTAIN.

A ROMANCE OF SCOTLAND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Amy Robsart," "The Bondage of Brandon,"  
"Breaking the Charm," "Ethel Arbutnot,"  
or, "Who's Her Husband?" &c. &c.

### CHAPTER VI.

#### RASHLEIGH'S VILLANY.

I must have been asleep—ay, sound asleep!  
And it was all a dream.

WHEN Diana had gone Frank felt sincerely sorry for having offended her, but he had done so, and he knew that she would not easily forgive him. It was useless to seek her in the drawing-room, so he helped himself as the bottle passed, and regardless of the consequences, drank until the wine mounted to his head, and he scarcely knew what he was saying. He talked loudly, sang a song, made bets on subjects with which he was wholly unfamiliar, and never refused the wine when it was offered him.

"Here's a health to Rashleigh!" exclaimed Mr. Osbaldistone. "He is going to leave us to-morrow. Pledge him, lads, upstanding."

The five brothers rose to their feet, but Frank obstinately kept his seat.

"What, Frank!" cried his uncle, "will you not drink to Rashleigh?"

"I drink to no Papist and false subject!" replied Frank.

Everyone stared at him, as if a bombshell had descended in their midst.

"Then I pray you, nephew, retire," said Mr. Osbaldistone. "I cannot have my own son insulted under this roof, the more especially as the epithets you apply to him are equally applicable to all of us."

"He would put Diana in a convent," replied Frank, "and I hate him for it!"

"Ah!" said Mr. Osbaldistone, "that is the way the fox runs. I did not think the scent laid in that direction, but the best hound will be at fault sometimes."

Rashleigh had become very pale, almost cadaverous, and Thornhill had laid his hand upon the hilt of his sword.

"My cousin," exclaimed Rashleigh, "has put a wrong construction on a few words which I accidentally let fall this afternoon, but I object very strongly to Miss Vernon's name being mentioned at such a time as this, and by a man who has so far forgotten himself as Mr. Francis has."

"Vile cur!" cried Frank. "How dare you talk to me!"

"We shall see who the cur is before long," replied Rashleigh.

Maddened with wine, all his latent dislike for his cousin came out, and Frank sprang to his feet.

"You are a miserable conspirator against the Government," he exclaimed. "You are no

friend to my cousin Diana! You had me arrested to-day, and—"

"I will simply say," interrupted Rashleigh, "that you say that which is untrue!"

"By heaven I cannot bear that!" replied Frank.

Raising his hand he struck him in the face and felled him to the ground. Scarcely had he done so than Thornhill, who had never liked Frank owing to the attention which he had seen Diana Vernon pay him, laid his hand upon his sword.

"Draw, sir, draw!" he cried. "If you are a man you will defend yourself. Rashleigh is no hand at the sword exercise, but I will take up his quarrel!"

Frank did not wait to be asked twice. Their swords were drawn simultaneously from their scabbards, and flashed in the light of the lamps, jangling harshly as they crossed.

"Saha!" exclaimed Thornhill, putting himself on guard. "I'll spit this London bantam cock as I would a lark!"

They lunged at one another, but Frank was no contemptible swordsman, and it would have gone hard with the impetuous Thornhill had not his father rushed forward and separated them.

"I'll have no fighting in my house!" cried Mr. Osbaldistone. "What! Are we common brawlers if we do take our wine?"

"Some men can take their wine like gentlemen!" exclaimed Thornhill, with a savage look at Frank.

"Take him upstairs and put him to bed," continued Mr. Osbaldistone.

Frank's cousins seized him, and in spite of his struggles conveyed him to his chamber, where

they locked him in. He kicked at the door, in vain trying to open it, and at length being thoroughly disheartened, threw himself on the bed and went to sleep.

When the morning came he experienced the acutest remorse. It was the first time in his life that he had indulged in such a debauch, and he felt that he had said and done things of which every gentleman ought to be ashamed. To Rashleigh he owed an apology and resolved to make it.

What troubled him most was the opinion in which Diana would hold him when she heard of his disgraceful conduct. He had actually made her the subject of a drunken quarrel, and a girl of her fine susceptibility was not likely to forget such an indignity. Dressing himself with care, he looked in the mirror and saw that his eyes were bloodshot, his face somewhat red and swollen, and that he bore traces of the dissipation of the preceding night.

When he reached the breakfast-room Diana was not to be seen. His cousins were all there. They burst out in a loud laugh when they saw him, as if they regarded the conflict between him and Rashleigh, which Thornhill had taken up, as an excellent joke.

"Here is our gallant master of the art of fence," exclaimed his uncle. "Sit thee down, lad, though I'll go bail you have not much appetite for breakfast. It takes a seasoned vessel, as the Covenanters would say, to stand the claret and aqua vite we drink in the North."

Frank looked at Rashleigh, whose eyes were cast down on his plate.

"I much fear, sir," he replied, "that I behaved very badly last night in your house, but I am not used to deep potations, and have scarcely any recollection of what occurred, though I am fully aware that I owe an apology to my cousin Rashleigh, which I am only too ready to make."

Rashleigh rose at these words, and returned Frank's gaze, though there was little of frankness in his eyes.

"As far as I am concerned," he said, "I have forgotten the matter already. If Francis means what he asserts, and was really unconscious of his actions, I accept his apology and beg he will say no more about it."

They shook hands after this, but though Frank's grasp was hearty and well-meant, the hand of Rashleigh touched his with the cold, limp and clammy sensation produced by contact with a fish. After this he sat down to breakfast, and when the meal was over Rashleigh took leave of his relatives, mounted his horse, and started for London to begin his new career.

Frank breathed more freely when he was gone, but he knew that he had made an enemy of him for life, though that did not trouble him much. He knew that he would have to face Die Vernon, and he dreaded the inevitable interview. What would she think of him after the way in which he had behaved?

Before the events of the evening which had just passed, she might have had some respect for him, but now she could only pity and condemn. He did not avoid her. On the contrary, he waited in the dining-room after the others had gone out to pursue their favourite sports, and about eleven, as he had expected, Die Vernon entered. There was a trace of sadness rather than displeasure on her face as she advanced towards him.

"May I hope to be pardoned for my insane conduct last night?" said Frank, with a deeply penitent air.

"You have my forgiveness, if that is of any use to you, though I should think that will scarcely assuage the mental distress you must suffer," answered Diana. "But it is all Rashleigh's doing. Tell me what he said concerning myself."

"I hardly like to," exclaimed Frank.

"I insist upon it," Diana rejoined.

"He saw with his deep penetration what I scarcely knew myself, Miss Vernon, and that is your charms have made an impression on me. It was useless, he said, for me to think of you, as you were destined to enter a convent or

marry your cousin Thornhill. As for Rashleigh, he declared that he could marry you if he wished, but he did not desire to be hampered with you."

"Did he use those words, the villain?" replied Miss Vernon, bitterly. "Never would I espouse Rashleigh; a thousand times preferable would be the living death of the convent. What else?"

"He characterised you as a flirt, and said you were surely trifling with my feelings."

A deep flush of indignation overspread her face.

"Have I ever given you cause, sir," she demanded, "to think that I regarded you in any other light than a friend?"

"Never!"

"Then let that pass. I have endeavoured to make your stay among us as agreeable as I could, and will continue to do so till the end."

Frank would have liked to urge his suit, for he felt that he really loved this beautiful girl, but her manner repelled him, and he determined to wait for a more favourable opportunity. He was soon after called away by one of his cousins to assist at a badger-bait, and the conversation ended.

Weeks glided by in the same monotonous manner, and Frank Osbaldistone was surprised at receiving no news from his father or Owen. He suspected that Rashleigh had in some way prejudiced his father against him or intercepted any letters sent him. One day Diana sought him with a letter in her hand, appearing somewhat excited.

"I have an epistle from a London correspondent which contains words of vital importance to you," she exclaimed.

"Indeed! I trust that my father is not ill?" he said.

"Your father is in Holland, whither he went to collect some large sums of money due to him. Rashleigh was left in sole charge of the business, and he has decamped with all the money in the bank. Your father is threatened with ruin. If he cannot meet his obligations within a month from this date he will be declared bankrupt, and he has no chance of doing so unless he can recover the money Rashleigh has stolen."

This news was a heavy blow to Frank, for he knew that financial disgrace would bring his father's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, and stern and uncompromising as the old man was he loved him dearly.

"The scoundrel," he said, "your forebodings were correct, Miss Vernon. Is your information reliable?"

"Perfectly. I cannot show you the letter, or tell you who my correspondent is, but you can believe in the truth of his statements. There has been a debate in the House of Lords on the subject of Morris's robbery in which your name is not mentioned in a complimentary manner, as you are suspected of being a Jacobite. The Duke of Argyll denies all knowledge of the man Campbell, who is thought to be an accomplice of yours."

"Then I am a personage of some importance," smiled Frank. "But I care little what the politicians think of me. My heart bleeds for my poor father. What could be Rashleigh's object in taking the money?"

"Shall I tell you?"

"If you will I shall be deeply grateful."

"Well, I will trust you, but not a word, on your honour. There is going to be a rising in the north. The friends of King James, whom you call the Pretender, are going to strike another blow for him. Money is greatly needed."

"If I could find Rashleigh I might avert my father's ruin," said Frank, thoughtfully.

"It is your duty to make the attempt," replied Diana. "Rashleigh is supposed to be in Scotland. Your father's head clerk has gone to Glasgow in search of him. Mr. Owen, I think the name is."

"That is right."

"Owen will beat a house in the Trongate,

and I should advise you to start immediately across the border and ride to Glasgow."

"I will do it, though it will cost me a pang to quit this house. May I say what is nearest my heart before I go? Heavens! It seems as if I have been living in a dream. The awakening has come. I must face the reality. Miss Vernon, Diana—I love you!"

Diana Vernon sighed deeply.

"I am very sorry that it should be so, Frank," she answered.

"Cannot you give me any hope?" he said in a tone of intense chagrin.

"None at all. Only yesterday I decided my fate. My confessor, Father Vaughan, was with me. I will not marry Thornhill, and I have sworn to enter a convent in a few days, and take the preliminary vows which wed me to Heaven."

Frank Osbaldistone was thunderstruck at the announcement.

"Oh, I beg of you," he said, "to reconsider your determination. Do not let the world lose so much loveliness."

"It is too late. When you part with me in a few minutes, you will leave me for ever—in fact you see me for the last time."

A tear trickled on her eyelid, but she dashed it away, as if ashamed of showing any sign of weakness.

"At least say that you care for me," he urged.

"I do indeed. I think more of you than I like to acknowledge even to myself."

"My acquaintance with you," Frank went on, "will always form an agreeable oasis in the weary desert of life."

"Forget me, Frank. You will some day be happy in the smiles of another."

"Ah, no," he replied. "The hardest lesson a lover has to learn is to forget, but if it is to be so, let me face the inevitable. Thank heaven I have something to do, the task you have set me will occupy my mind. I will save my father if it be possible."

Diana handed him an envelope, which was sealed and tied with red tape; it bore no address.

"Take this," she exclaimed. "You are going into a strange country, and amongst a wild, lawless people, and you will encounter more perils than you have any idea of."

"What am I to do with it?"

"On no account open it, unless you find yourself in dire distress. If your life is in danger—if you have no friends and do not know where to look for help, you may open my letter."

"But if none of these things should happen?"

"In that case you must destroy it unread," said Die Vernon. "Give me your word of honour as a gentleman that you will obey my instructions."

"I do."

"It is enough; now we part. Adieu, cousin Frank, think kindly sometimes of the unhappy Diana Vernon."

She wrung his hand, almost tenderly, and before he had time to make any reply at once left the room.

Frank cast a despairing glance after her retreating form, his heart sank within him, and he went mechanically to make preparations for his journey. When he returned to Osbaldistone Hall, if he ever did so, Die Vernon would be beyond his reach, immured in the walls of a cloister.

He wished that he had never seen her, for had that been the case, he would have been spared the misery of cherishing a hopeless passion.

But stirring events were before him, he was beginning to live his life, and he nerved himself to do his duty like a man in the crisis which was taking place in the affairs of his father.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE JOURNEY TO THE NORTH.

Swiftly they followed the flight of him who was speeding before them. EPANGELINE.

The news which Frank Osbaldistone had re-



oeived from Diana Vernon grieved him greatly, for he valued his father's credit very highly. It was his firm determination to save it and him if it was in the power of man to do so. Owen was in Glasgow, trying to arrange the affairs of the firm in that place, and to find some trace of the villain Rashleigh, consequently it was his duty to join the old clerk as quickly as possible and assist him in every way in his power.

Knowing the resources of Rashleigh and the cunning with which nature had endowed him, he resolved to say nothing to anyone at the Hall about his contemplated departure, which he intended to take at the early hour of six in the morning. His horse was in the stable, and he could saddle it without being seen; but he required a guide, as he was totally unacquainted with the country in which he was going to travel. After having written a letter to his uncle the squire, thanking him for his kindness and announcing his sudden going away, he concluded to leave it in a conspicuous place after all had retired to rest for the night and went out to seek a companion.

In the grounds he encountered the gardener, a garrulous and canny Scot, with whom he had often held brief conversations on indifferent subjects. His name was Andrew Fairservice, and he had been for years in the service of Squire Osbaldistone, though he was always grumbling at himself for residing in a family the members of which were well known to be Papists and Jacobites.

"Give your honour good e'en," exclaimed Andrew; "has anything happit? You look a wee bit fashed about something, though it would more becom me to mind my ain business than to be speerin into other people's."

"I am glad you have asked me the question," replied Frank, "as you may be of use to me. I purpose making a journey to a town called Glasgow; do you happen to know anyone who will guide me to it?"

"Hoot, hoot! mon," cried Andrew, "Glasgow's a ceety. It's na a town; my kith and kin live nigh there and I myself was born in the neebourhood. Mebbe your honour would pay a body weel."

"Anything the man demands in reason," replied Frank, "then I ken fu' weel the chiel that will guide you."

A pleased smile irradiated Frank's countenance at this announcement, for it relieved his mind of an uncertainty.

"Let him meet me a mile down the road at the hour of six to-morrow morning," he said.

"My word!" said Andrew, "that's quick work, for I shall have to find a beast to carry me."

"You, Andrew!"

"Hech, sir! does it surprise you that I'm thinking of flitting frae this nest of heretics. I've been waiting for the chance, this many a year, and now it's come to me, deil a fear o' me but I'll tak it. The squire owes me a mickle bit o' siller, but I hae the price of some apples—a gowden pippin—I hae sold, so I'll hae be a loser by him, and I ken just the horse that will suit me."

"Well," replied Frank, "I have no particular fault to find with you, and for want of a better, I'll engage you."

"Your honour will never regret it, for I ken every inch of the road. I'll be waiting for you afore the dew's done fa'ing on the Cheviots."

"You must be silent to everyone respecting my journey."

Andrew put his finger on his lips and nodded his head significantly.

"What Andrew says won't do anybody any harm or any gude, for it'll amount to naething. I'm too keen to hae the siller to foil our journey, and I want to shake off the dust frae my feet when I quit this house of the sons of Belial."

"I'll thank you to speak more respectfully of my relations," said Frank, who did not altogether relish the old man's freedom; "now go and make your preparations. If you make any blunder, I'll break every bone in your skin, you rascal."

Saying this, Frank left the gardener muttering to himself some words, which he did not think it prudent perhaps for his new master to hear.

The dinner passed off as usual at the hall, except that Die Vernon did not make her appearance. Probably she did not wish to see Frank again, as another meeting with her cousin would have been extremely painful to both of them, and he thanked her delicacy which had spared him the infliction.

His cousins eat and drank in their usual prodigious manner, and indulged in their usual sottish behaviour afterwards. Frank left their uncongenial society as soon as possible and retired to his room, where he made his preparations for leaving; this did not take him long, as he had simply to pack his saddle bags, ready for the morning. When this task was accomplished he snatched a few hours sleep and awoke with a start, having dreamt that some Highland freebooter had captured him, and was about to cut him down with his claymore, because he would not take off his hat and cry "Long live King James."

Rising, he proceeded to the stable and saddled his horse, which stood in the next stall to one occupied by a fine mare belonging to Thornhill Osbaldistone. This stall, to his surprise, was empty; he wondered if his cousin had gone out on some nocturnal expedition, but he had no time for speculation, and having mounted rode down the avenue. Gaining the main road, he saw in the grey mist of the early morning a solitary horseman which he soon made out to be Andrew Fairservice.

"Is that your honour's self?" asked Andrew.

On receiving a reply in the affirmative, Andrew set spurs to his nag and led the way at a quick pace for a good ten miles, though Frank frequently cried out to him to moderate his pace. At length the man pulled up and allowed his master to overtake him. It was now broad daylight and the sun was shining brightly, which enabled Frank to obtain a good view of the horse which the Scotchman was bestriding. It was the favourite mare of Thornhill which he had missed from its accustomed place in the stable, and the cause of Andrew's haste was explained: he had evidently stolen it and had ridden quickly to avoid being seen or overtaken.

"I was going to ask the reason of your speed," said Frank in a tone of displeasure, "but I can understand now why you rode as if you were riding a race. That is my cousin's horse."

"Na," replied Andrew, "it is mine, Maister Thornhill owed me a matter of ten pounds which he borrowed a year gone by and I ha' paid myself."

Much to the fellow's chagrin, Frank insisted upon his leaving it at the first place they stopped at, to be returned to its rightful owner.

"A wilfu' mon must 'een ha' his way," said Andrew, sadly. "But if we be stopped on the road by any braw Highland chiel, your honour will be sorry for this."

"Who is likely to stop us?"

"Plenty of the reevin' Hieland thieves," answered Andrew. "There's the chiel of the clan, Campbell, Rob Roy, they ca' him, the biggest deil o' them a'; he'd mak' most any mon stan' and deelever."

Frank had heard a great deal of the famous Rob Roy Macgregor, who was a devoted adherent of the house of Stuart, and consequently, a determined enemy of the Government, whom he harassed continually. When he emerged from his mountain strongholds his disguises were as numerous as his deeds were daring, and though he had been several times captured, he had contrived to escape, and boasted openly that there was not a gaol in Scotland strong enough to hold him.

During one of his conversations with Die Vernon, Frank remembered that she had mentioned the name of Rob Roy, intimating that he was connected with Rashleigh in some mysterious way, and other leaders of the Jacobite party. In spite of Andrew's gloomy prophecies, he made him exchange the mare for another, and sent the former horse back to the Hall with a note of apology to Thornhill Osbaldistone, whom he begged to acquit him of any participation in the disgraceful proceeding.

They pursued their journey without meeting with any freebooters, and after crossing barren moors and deserted hills, reached the fertile valley of the Clyde, in which lay the interesting city of Glasgow, which, in those days, had not attained the greatness and prosperity which it now enjoys, although even then it showed some indications of the trade and industries which have made it famous throughout the world.

They proceeded to an inn, where they put up their horses, and procured sleeping accommodation, after which Frank went in search of Owen at his lodgings in the Trongate. Here he was astonished, as well as pained, to hear that the worthy man had three days before disappeared without settling his bill, and had not since been heard of.

It was Sunday when Frank reached Glasgow, and, of course, in Scotland all business was at a standstill. So particular were the Scotch, even at that time, in their religious observance of the Sabbath, that it was impossible to gain entrance to a counting-house, or he would have gone to his father's correspondents, MacVittie and Co.

He was persuaded that they would—if any one did—know something respecting the fate of Owen, for the house of Osbaldistone had large transactions with that of MacVittie, and he was afraid, from what he knew of his father's affairs, that the balance of account was largely in favour of the Scotch house.

Much against his will he had to put off his visit until the following day, and being strongly urged by Andrew Fairservice, he walked to the Minster, or Cathedral Church of Glasgow, and entered the solemn looking building just as the iron tongue of the huge bell had ceased calling the honest burghers to prayer.

The Cathedral was a grand and massive but gloomy old pile, filled with worshippers, many of whom were compelled to stand, among whom were Frank and Andrew. They took up a position near a large pillar and listened attentively to the service, Andrew being especially impressed, and joining in the responses with all the devotional energy which is characteristic of the Scotch character.

Frank had not been long in the church before he was disturbed in a peculiar manner, for someone whispered in his ear, "You are in danger in Glasgow." He turned round abruptly, but could only see passive stolid faces, the owners of which were covering their prayer-books. Alarmed at this warning, he determined to keep perfectly quiet, thinking, and with reason, that the person who had said so much would speak again. Nor was he mistaken in this supposition. Ten minutes elapsed, when he felt something pushed into his hand, and the same voice said:

"I repeat that peril environs you. Read, mark, and inwardly digest what I have written."

Again Frank turned round, as his fingers closed tightly on the paper, but he could only see the same faces as before, though he fancied he detected a figure in a heavy cloak disappearing behind the pillar. To remain until the service was over was impossible. He was tormented by doubts and fears, as well as devoured by a fierce impatience to see what the unknown had written on the paper.

Without attracting the attention of the devout Andrew, he contrived to slip away from the sacred edifice, and once in the close of the cathedral, he unclasped his hand and looked at the paper. It was but a scrap, and its contents were hurriedly scrawled in a bold hand, which did not seem as if it had been tutored in school or college.

"Meet me on the bridge," said the unknown, "at midnight. Until then remain at your inn, and do not reveal yourself to anybody, or ill, mayhap, will befall you. Fear nothing from me. I am a friend."

Much exercised at the warning conveyed in this brief note, Frank Osbaldistone, nevertheless, determined to keep the appointment. He was brave, and feared no man. In fact, he did not think the unknown intended to harm him. If he did, he carried a pistol, and could rely on his good sword, which hung always by his side. During the hours that he had to remain in his

room, he turned the matter over in his mind, and the more he thought upon it the more perplexed he became.

The conclusion he came to was that Rashleigh meditated some plot against him, and that Diana Vernon had sent someone to warn and protect him. When one of the city clocks had struck the half hour after eleven, he sallied forth, but he had the misfortune to meet Andrew at the door.

"Surely," said Andrew, "your honour is not ganging out at this hour?"

"Why not, Andrew?" replied Frank. "The Sabbath is nearly over, and the night is very inviting for a walk. Look how the fair moon shines over the Clyde."

"Ye'd better be reading the Psalms o' David," continued Andrew, "or edifying yersel' by a perusal o' the New Testament; but I'm a fule to tell ye a bit o' my mind."

"That's very true, Andrew," answered Frank. "When I want your advice I will ask for it. At present I do not think I stand in need of it."

Andrew shook his head sagaciously.

"I ken fu' weel," he said, "that the deil's aye seeking whom he may devour."

At this speech Frank grew angry. He did not like the familiarity of his servant, and the time was running on. He could not afford to waste the minutes, for he had to meet the mysterious stranger at midnight.

"I will thank you," rejoined Frank, "to look after the salvation of your own soul, and leave my future to myself."

"That's a' richt enough, your honour," said Andrew, somewhat abashed, "but I'll een gang along wi' you and see that you come to nae harm during your peregrinations through the coety."

This speech caused Frank to completely lose his temper, and laying his hand on his sword he cried:

"If you dare to follow me a single step, you rascal, I'll run you through the body."

At this threat Andrew ran into the house and hid himself behind the door, trembling like a leaf.

"I canna' bide wi' him," he muttered, "he's a deevil, but he's got the bluid o' the Osbaldistones in him, and I'll warrant he's nae better than the rest o' them. I'll quit his service. Troth, an' it were not for the loose hand he keeps o' his siller and the penny fee I get, I wadna wait on the braw callant anither day."

It was fortunate for Andrew Fairservice that Mr. Frank Osbaldistone did not hear these disparaging remarks, or it might have gone hard with him. Frank walked hastily toward the brigg, or bridge, which at that time was the only one over the Clyde, and paced restlessly up and down the deserted quay which led up to it. Not a human form was to be seen, and his anxiety increased as the clock of the neighbouring church of St. Mungo clanged out the midnight hour.

Scarcely had the last note died away than he saw a man in a thick cloak standing clearly defined in the moonlight. Although he could not repress a slight tremor, he walked boldly towards him.

(To be Continued.)

#### LITTLE DUTIES.

THERE are certain duties which we owe both to ourselves and others. Little habits of cleanliness pay for the trouble of cultivating them; for health depends upon them. If one is accustomed to complete change in the day and night garments, and neatly folds and lays them in the wardrobe, closing doors and windows to exclude dust and flies, or as is often done, put the night attire under pillow of the owner, what has been done to prevent injury to the health? Nothing. Is it any great trouble, on retiring, to hang the garments, as they are put off, one by one, where they will be thoroughly dried and aired? It will not take five minutes extra time. Leave the party, the ball, or so-

cial converse by the fireside five minutes earlier, if too tired to attend to this duty properly.

And in the morning don't be late to breakfast—that's bad; but even in that departure from good breeding is less reprehensible than to throw the night clothes in a heap, leave the bed unaired and the windows unopened. Rise five minutes earlier if need be; hang up the night clothes where they will have the full benefit of the pure fresh morning air; raise the windows; throw off the bedclothes, hanging them loosely over chairs; put the pillows in full range of the windows, and pull the mattress over the footboard, and go to breakfast with a clear conscience. Everything is kept in order by the performance of small duties.

#### A MODERN IDYL.

MID way the sylvan glade she stood,  
A modern Nymph, in silk attire:  
Around her heaved the murmurous  
wood—

The bracken burned like emerald  
fire:

The torrent tresses of her hair—  
Unlocked from jewelled band and  
comb—

Blew lightly on the perfumed air  
In one long fleece, like golden foam.

Alert, with pulses stilled to hear,  
She watched the dim path down the  
dell,

One hand behind her pearly ear  
Curled like a hollow, rosy shell;  
She watched the green path winding  
dim

Thro' flickering sun and leafy shade,  
If haply some sweet hint of him  
The secret-whispering wood be-  
trayed.

So near she stood I could but mark  
The rapt intentness of her face—

The earnest eyes, so dewy dark,  
The lissome shape, the supple  
grace;

As, hidden in my ferny lair,  
(She never guessed my presence,  
sweet,)

I deftly sketched her standing there,  
The Genius of that dim retreat.

And while I wrought my fancy wove  
About my sylvan heroine

The romance of a recreant love—  
A hapless Phyllis, left to pine.

For, gathering in a dewy throng,  
I saw the big tears overflow,  
And "Oh!"—she sighed—"He carries  
long!

How could he disappoint me so?"

Till down the path her sweet eyes  
scan

There rushes, breathless, into view  
A nervous little gentleman,

The Corydon long over due.

"My life!" he pants, and skurries on:  
With tragic glance she eyes him  
o'er:

"Good gracious! Where's the costume,  
John,

I ordered for our 'Pinafore?'"

E. A. B.

#### BARGAIN AND SALE.

THE custom of marriage among the Osage Indians is extremely simple. A man who desires to marry goes to the lodge of the woman he proposes to marry and sits down outside the door, awaiting an invitation to go in. At first he sends a present of one pony, and if in response to the gift there is no invitation to come

within the lodge he sends another pony as a present; if the second does not answer the purpose, a third, fourth, fifth or even a tenth is sent. When the number of ponies is satisfactory to the father, the donor is invited within, and the bargain is done. If it so happens that he takes the eldest girl in the family he is entitled to take all her younger sisters to himself, or if he does not take them for himself, he bargains with any other applicants for their possession.

The whole proceeding is a mere matter of bargain and sale, in which women are disposed of without their consent, and very much like cattle in the market. There is no limit to the number of wives, as they are called, which an Indian may have, and by their custom he can change the occupants of his lodge as often as he pleases.

#### HOME ATTRACTIONS.

WHEN love and affection are banished from home, life loses its greatest charm. Some homes are full of love and sunshine for strangers, and all ugliness and gloom for the ones for whom they live. To constitute a truly happy home, there should be pretty little personal adornments on the part of the wife, who thereby shows a desire to please the husband, and to add to the general attractions of her home. A pleasant word on her part, when the over-worked man comes home, often eats away the raw edge of some trouble on his mind, and draws out a corresponding desire to be both agreeable and respectful, which characteristics are always accompanied by affection.

What is true of manners is true of dress also. Rudeness, roughness, and impatience are soon followed by insolence, and when sweet temper gives way to anger and discord the home circle is no longer attractive. A disrespectful manner on the side of husband or wife leads to disastrous consequences.

#### IMMODERATE READING.

POING steadily over books is a bad habit for any woman to acquire. We think more than an hour's reading at one sitting, unless in special cases, injurious, producing very often headache and lassitude. A strong, healthy woman may not feel it at first, but she will in time. Let her begin by being a bookworm, and she will end by literally "reading herself out,"—that is, getting herself in such a habit of exhausting her strength, that the very effort of settling her thoughts upon a subject will grow wearisome, finally impossible.

One hour in the daytime, with perhaps two in the evening, every day, is enough for anyone according to our belief and experience. The little gained then and well-digested, will be worth days of reckless devouring, and the interim between reading discontinued and reading renewed, will give opportunity to question and think and reason, and to return to the book refreshed and well able to continue its perusal.

At a dinner the other evening a Turkish sweetmeat, which is much advertised, was handed round. One of the guests, who had been in the east, and who declined to partake of this delicacy, observed that it was believed to be made of "concentrated Sul-tanas." A momentary horror seemed to fall on some of the company who were eating rather freely. They had a vision of lovely woman boiled down and made into sweetmeats, and imagined that at that moment they might be devouring the essence of some charming creature who had adorned the harem.

The probate and legacy duty paid by the Rothschild family recently amounted to 263,000.





[GREAT EXPECTATIONS.]

## TWICE REJECTED;

OR,

## THE NAMELESS ONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"The Baronet's Son," "Who Did It?" &c., &c.*

## CHAPTER XI.

Weep no more, nor sigh nor groan,  
Sorrow calls no time that's gone;  
Joy's winged dreams fly fast,  
Why should sickness linger last?

SCARCELY had the ladies driven off from the cottage where the exciting scene described in our last chapter had taken place ere a step was heard descending a sort of ladder staircase, such as is found at times in old-fashioned cottages, and in a few moments a slight, tall young fellow emerged from the dark corner in which it was situated.

"Well, grandmother," he said, "I've heard all. You didn't know I was listening, but I got in through the roof an hour or so ago. I had an idea that something was in the wind, and I got away from Padstow early this morning, instead of to-morrow, as you sent word. It's a nice business, I find. So I'm to be a gentleman after all? You've given hints of it before now, but I never believed you. You're a splendid old granny. I do say," he added, with a coarse laugh, "a regular tramp."

Mrs. Somers looked with half indignation and half pride at the youth before her. He was certainly handsome, there was no doubt of that. It might not be a refined character of form or feature, but yet there was decidedly strong and manly physical beauty in both. His limbs were firmly built, as if he had been a good four years older than he really was, and his brow and eyes

had something of a foreign type in their form. His hair was dead black, such as is rarely seen save in a Spaniard, and his skin of a clear brown, which was almost olive in its hue, while his teeth had probably in consequence a dazzling whiteness.

He was certainly in all physical respects such a one as would cause pride to many a parent. Yet either from nature or training he had also a sinister expression in his eyes and a coarse tone of voice that was scarcely consistent with the outward aspect of his person.

"Listen to me, Hugo," said Mrs. Somers, resolutely. "I am not going to reprove you at present for the disobedience and deceit of which you have been guilty; but one thing I do promise you—that unless you obey me and prove worthy of your good fortune you shall never possess it even now. No, never! I will swear it if you doubt me, boy. I am not going to take all this trouble, and"—she was going to add some other word, but it was choked ere it was well pronounced, and then the sentence was resumed in a different manner. "In plain English, Hugo, I have toiled and striven to bring you up as might befit your future if I could prove your rights; but even if you are not my grandson I desire and insist on the respect and obedience of one, and you shall not touch one shilling of your wealth, nor even wear the title I am claiming for you, without you swear in your turn to obey me."

The young man looked at her with a cold, questioning sneer on his face that was all but defiance to the threatened penalty.

"There's only two things, then, to choose from, granny. Either I am or I am not the son of this grand marquis. If I am you have been a great goose not to make it and the proofs known long before, and if I am not you are a great swindler, so you can choose between the two," he said, with a sneer that went more home than it might be he intended to her at whom it was levelled.

"I don't understand you, boy. You are talking like an idiot of what you do not compre-

hend," returned Mrs. Somers. "What I mean is this: I can either substantiate or weaken all the proofs I have of your birth. It is, as you must have gathered since you were so mean as to listen to what was no business of yours to hear, that this proud comtesse is still doubtful as to the reality of your birth and claims on her. You certainly depend on me for the support and carrying out of this claim."

The young man's eyes were lowered, as if musing over the words, but his next question scarcely seemed to refer to them.

"Granny," he said, suddenly, "who was that pretty girl with the old comtesse?"

"What does it matter to you? How did you see what she was, Hugo?" demanded the old woman.

"Ah, it is, not so difficult. There are peep holes, as you may know, and there was a soft voice that induced me to try and get a glimpse of the speaker; and 'pon my word, I never saw a prettier girl, nor one that I more inclined to go in for."

The dame fidgetted uneasily on her couch.

"Foolish boy. She is the very last you should even dream of," she said, angrily.

"Why not, granny?"

"Boy, don't be an insolent fool to always ask questions when you are scarcely out of your childhood," she replied. "But I will tell you at once what I do mean. Leila Loraine is above you as you are now, and below you if you gain your proper rank. Either way she is no match for you, and if you ever think of her for a moment you will rue the day. That's my warning, boy, and as there is a heaven above us it will assuredly be carried out."

Hugo looked somewhat daunted. In truth, he had not yet thrown off the awe he had been accustomed to entertain of his guardian, the only relative he had known from his childhood; and perhaps with the rash hopefulness of youth he looked forward to the period of freedom that must be his ere long.

"All right, granny," he said, "don't disturb yourself. I expect I shall find plenty more

quite as pretty as this girl when I get to be a gentleman, so you need not just grudge me a little amusement while I am preparing for the great game. It's like the canter before the race, eh, granny?" he added, with a laugh.

He had really the key to the old woman's sole interest in life, and he knew it. For years she had lived for him alone, and it was too late for her to steel herself against his influence.

"You are a foolish boy, Hugo; but if you'll keep to what you say there's no great harm done, and it will be a long time to come before you can really court or marry anyone," she said, "so just be docile and guided by me, and take care to appear—as you can do when you like—a gentleman, and I give you my word in less than a week from this time you shall be the declared heir to a large fortune and the presumptive heir to a marquise. Is not that worth a try, my boy?" she went on, cheerily.

"Rather, granny. You shan't complain of me," he said, nodding sagaciously.

"You will have to give up calling me that, Hugo," she said, patting his head tenderly. "It will not be nice for me to think you are not my daughter's son, but as it is not so in reality, and it is so much for your good, it cannot be helped. You must learn to call me by my name when you are a marquis, my boy, and this grand comtesse is your aunt."

It scarcely affected the young man so much as she perhaps hoped to learn the inevitable result of his elevation. An "All right, granny," and a careless nod and smile was the prompt reply of the handsome heir to the house of Spinola.

## CHAPTER XII.

A lawyer art thou? Draw not nigh,  
So carry to some other place  
The hardness of thy coward eye,  
The falsehood of thy sallow face.

THE next twenty-four hours were scarcely more tedious to the Comtesse de Cenci than they were anxious and wearisome to her young companion. A presentiment of evil haunted her beyond power of control. All the events of the past rushed on her mind with overwhelming force.

Her strange history, so like, and yet alas! so unlike that of this obscure heir to wealth and honour, came back to her in all its bitterness and mystery. She—poor innocent unfortunate that she was—had been nursed in the lap of luxury as the descendant of a long honoured line, the heiress of fortune, the admired and beloved of the man whom of all others she would have chosen as her husband.

Such had been her early life from which she was hurled at one fell swoop of evil fortune's wings. For this, her prototype, as it were, in mystery and revenge, there was indeed a strange contrast in destiny.

Nursed in adversity, he was about to spring at a bound into wealth and honour. His wrongs would be redressed ere he was well aware of their existence, and the life before him would but seem the brighter and clearer from the obscurity of his earliest years.

Ah! what a contrast did it present to the sad stricken girl, and the image of him she had once loved so fondly rose up to deepen the agony of her sorrowful memories. Happily she was not permitted to indulge the dangerous passion of grief in peace.

She was needed by the nervous, excitable comtesse to calm and quiet and encourage her in her tedious suspense. Leila could not but fancy that there was an unacknowledged doubt and hesitation in the mind of the invalid, but it was not for her to suggest again any precautions in the emergency, and she was content to quiet and support the nervous and shaken woman as she best might.

After all, it was no province of hers to guard the actions of one twice her age and ten times her experience in life. But—

Be the day weary, or be the day long,  
At length it cometh to even-song.

And the two strangely assorted companions

once more set off on their way to the cottage. It was different from its appearance on the previous day. There were all signs of the litter of sickness cleared away.

A table was placed in the middle of the room, on which was paper and pens and ink, and in a chair beside it was seated a plain, middle-aged man, decidedly more seedy in dress than the clerk of Mr. Vansandam, and a great deal his inferior in air and bearing, and even the cut of his features.

He rose, however, with some deference when the comtesse entered, and bowing respectfully, placed a chair for her near the couch, while indicating more carelessly a seat at a little distance for the younger lady.

"So you have kept your word, madame," said the invalid woman. "And so have I. Mr. Cooke is here with the necessary papers for you to sign, and then the final reckoning between us can be made."

"What do you mean by reckoning?" said Madame de Cenci, wearily.

"Well, I suppose that the comtesse will be inclined to make a proper consideration for the charges at which Mrs. Somers has been placed for her nephew," interrupted the lawyer. "It is scarcely fair that they should be borne by her when he is the actual heir to such wealth."

"No, no; of course not," returned the comtesse, quickly. "These will be all settled—all, when once my heart is set at rest. As to the real identity of my boy—my brother's boy—only let me be assured of that and I will do anything you can ask."

And the agitated woman clasped her hands together in a genuine outburst of torturing suspense that might well touch the hardest and the most unfeeling of hearts.

"My dear madame, calm yourself," said the lawyer, coolly. "There can be no satisfaction to you or to myself or my clients for the business to be thus hurried over. When once the identity is, as you say, established, and you are conscious that all is right, it will then be a mere matter of grace and favour, which Mrs. Somers is not inclined to receive. She has a certain claim to justice, and nothing can be easier than for you to satisfy it. First sign this paper conveying to her five hundred pounds, which is certainly less than the boy has cost her, and in five minutes more he shall stand before you ready to receive your blessing and your adoption as a son."

Leila would have willingly stepped forward to arrest the pen. There was something that repelled and awakened doubt in the oily yet resolute lawyer. Yet what hesitation could there be in believing a tale that certainly tallied so well with the facts of the case, and in any way it was no right of hers to interfere. So the signature was affixed. The girl was called on as a witness. Mat Somers was the second, and all was complete.

"Now, let him come—quick, quick," said the comtesse, agitatedly.

The lawyer went to the foot of the stairs and gave a slight call to a name that Leila did not catch, but it was evidently expected and waited for by its object. There was a sudden bound—a rapid descent of the narrow stairs, and then the slight figure of Hugo Cardwell, by which name he had been hitherto known, stood in the low ceilinged apartment, the roof of which he almost seemed to touch.

"Hugo—my boy—my brother's child, come to me, let me look at you, let me trace his features," gasped the comtesse, hurriedly.

Hugo's eyes had turned furtively on Leila, even as he quickly obeyed the command of his new found relative; and bent respectfully and with a certain amount of grace to kiss her thin delicate hand. She gazed at him for a few moments as he bent on one knee before her. Her eyes were keenly riveted on each feature in turn as if she would peruse them like a mysterious book. Then she bent over his kneeling figure and threw her arms eagerly round his neck.

"Yes—yes, it is so, it is true. My boy—my nearest of kin—my long lost one! Thank God you are found at last, and that I have power to atone for the injustice that has been wrought in

your early years. "Forgive me—forgive me, son of my adoption, and receive me as thy mother since I have but thee, and thy own parents are numbered with the dead."

"I—oh yes, certainly!" he replied in a tone that had more embarrassment than pleasure or tenderness in its ring; "and you will excuse me if I am not quite up to all the grander ways, and the more so if they are foreign," he added, glancing at Leila with an inquiring look, as if to see the impression he was making. "It's all strange to a fellow, you see, worse than to a girl, to my thinking. But I'll do my best—oh yes, my very best, auntie," he went on in the language that was so imperfectly understood by the comtesse save when interpreted in Leila's soft tones, and more especially when, as in Hugo's case, it was tinged with a provincial accent.

Perhaps a slight shade of disappointment crossed the mobile features of the comtesse at this break in her intercourse with her adopted son. But she did not allow herself to indulge the unreasonable weakness, and her sweet smiles and the few expressive words of tender English that she could use, sufficiently bespoke the affectionate welcome she was prepared to give her nephew.

"And you are not my cousin—not the old lady's daughter!" observed Hugo in a aside to Leila as the documents on the table were being signed and the last arrangements made.

"Not the slightest relation," returned the girl, coldly. "I am only a companion to the comtesse, a paid dependent," she went on hastily, as if to place the greatest amount of distance between them.

"So much the better," was the youth's inward reflection, but he only added:

"It would be too great a loss if you were to leave her, such as no money could be too much to prevent, Miss Leila; is not that your name?" he returned, with what was meant to be a fascinating allurements of tone and look.

Fortunately for the patience of the girl and the harmony of the scene, Hugo was at that moment called by his whilome grandmother.

"You won't have to remain much longer at your Padstow office, my boy, but still, it is not right that you should trespass on the patience of your master. It is the hour for you to return; Madame de Cenci and I will arrange the proper time and place for you to join her and assume your new station in life. You would not wish it to be too abrupt, would you, madame?" she added deferentially. "It would only make unpleasant suspicions on you and him."

"That is for me to consider," said Madame de Cenci, impatiently. "However, for my boy's sake, I will not be rash or hasty. He can be ready in a week, can he not, Mrs. Somers? and I will arrange for my return ere then."

Leila's heart sank as she interpreted these words to the whilome grandmother of the heir. Would she so soon have to choose between being cast on the wide world and leaving her native land with that feeble, weak-minded invalid and that unpleasant nephew, from whom she instinctively shrank with distrust and dislike? However, she had but to submit and wait the result.

All was soon concluded. The comtesse's plan was sanctioned. Hugo took his leave of his newly found aunt with a tenderness that he would willingly have extended to the beautiful Leila, and soon vanished from the scene, to the intense relief of the object of his admiration. Then came the most momentous though brief part of the transaction.

Madame de Cenci listened with mingled eagerness and impatience to Leila's deliberate, clear interpretation of the document that constituted Hugo de Spinola, formerly known as Hugo Cardwell, as her heir and residuary legatee, and then she seized the pen and signed it in her clear, elegant writing. It was witnessed and sealed, and placed in the lawyer's keeping till the final arrangements should be made for the settlement of the fortunate youth in his native land and the assertion of his ancestral rights.

"Now, we will lose no more time, Leila," said Madame de Cenci, eagerly, rising from her chair, as if all impatient for the full completion of her



plans. "Farewell, Mrs. Somers; I shall write to you as soon as my plans are fully arranged—or, rather, Miss Leila will write for me," she added, with a kind smile at her young companion.

It seemed as if the gladness within her heart shed a lustre over every object within her influence, and her farewell to the brusque and untutored Mat was as kind and gracious as the most exacting could have deemed even possible in their relative positions. As soon as they were in the carriage that was to convey them to the nearest railway station her long pent up feelings found vent. She clasped the slight form of the girl in her arms with almost maternal tenderness.

"My darling, mia-bene," she murmured, in her soft Italian tones, "I would that you too were my own. I cannot but be grateful that it is a male heir to my father's line who has been discovered by my exertions and yours, my dear one. Yet you are so sweet and so beautiful—just what I could have acknowledged with pride as my daughter—that I would not have murmured if Heaven had sent me one like you. Leila, you will never leave me while I live, will you?" she went on, fondly caressing Leila's hand, that was supporting her tired and weary form.

"No, I will not, my dear comtesse," said the girl, fondly. "Not unless I am compelled to do so, never."

Leila little dreamed that the promise which in her sad sobriety she thought could not be for more than a brief period would be so short in its duration, or it might have been given with even less than that gentle reservation; but it soothed and satisfied the invalid, now exhausted by the violent excitement of the last few hours. They reached the station in tranquil silence, and Leila was anxious to establish her fragile charge in a carriage where no one would disturb her repose on the journey that awaited them, though its length was to be broken half way, in consideration of her feeble health.

Leila was not deceived in her hopes. It was not long after the train was fairly in motion ere Madame de Cenci gradually sank into a sleep more quiet and refreshing than she had enjoyed since quitting London on their exciting errand. She abandoned herself to the quiet rest that she now but rarely enjoyed. It was not actual slumber. It was rather a calming lassitude that overspread her mental and bodily faculties, though it did not keep them in the blessed land of oblivion.

She knew not how long she was thus lost to surrounding objects when she became unpleasantly aware of a rocking, irregular motion of the carriage in which they were reposing. She roused herself from her semi-unconsciousness and regarded her companion with anxious alarm, for she feared its effect on her sensitive nerves; but the comtesse was still sleeping in happy insensibility to any threatening danger, and Leila did not venture to make even a movement that would waken her from her deep sleep.

The interval was not long. In a few minutes there was a sudden concussion of the carriage with some neighbouring and formidable object. Then a crash, loud and prolonged, as if the whole train was being successively destroyed. Screams of terror and pain, and Leila and her companion were thrown from their seats, she knew not where. The carriage was overturned, and for some minutes she could not venture to move for fear of injuring Madame de Cenci, whose form she could feel under her, but who neither moved nor spoke in that terrible crisis.

It was nearly dark, and the lamps in the carriage had been extinguished by this sudden reversal, so it was extremely difficult for the girl to find any way of extricating herself from her painful and terrible position, while as to expecting help from others it was a vain and futile hope. However, Leila was slender and active, and by degrees she managed to scramble through the window above her, and then spring lightly to the ground.

It was a terrible scene that presented itself in its dire confusion and suffering. Some crying piteously for help, others groaning with

suffering, and others—alas! lying still and motionless on the ground in utter insensibility. Leila hasily passed on, trusting to find some aid in opening the door and raising the unlucky comtesse from her prison.

But even with that engrossing anxiety in view, she could not be utterly deaf to the piteous appeals as she went along the sides of the shattered carriages, though she could scarcely hope to do anything to amiorate their sufferings. But one voice did arrest her steps, faint and low as it was in its tone.

"Help! help! or I shall bleed to death!"

It was from a foreigner who lay prostrate on the ground, and Leila stopped to soothe, if she could not remedy, the agony that spoke in those low, faint accents. She could distinguish even in that prostrate attitude that the speaker was a cripple in the distortion of his lower limbs, and that very circumstance increased the quick sympathy she felt for his condition.

"Where are you hurt?" she said. "I will try to stop the blood if I can, but I, too, have a friend who is waiting for help."

"Here, here!" he said, pointing to his arm. "There is a wound, and the blood is taking away my very life, and no one comes to me, not even Clara."

Leila knelt down and tightly bound her handkerchief and then a scarf that she wore round her throat round the wound that was certainly ghastly in its depth and the blood flowing from it, and then hastily bathed his face and his hands with some eau de cologne from her bottle.

"I can't stay," she said, "but I will send someone if I can. What name shall I tell them?"

"Lorraine," he said—"Lorraine, and my cousin is in the train somewhere. Blessings on you, sweet lady," he added, as the light of a lantern fell on her lovely features.

Leila hastily flew on in her object in quest of some aid to help in opening the door of the carriage she had left, and in a few more seconds she succeeded in inducing one of the men who were now rushing on the scene of the disaster to accompany her and force open, if possible, the door of the prostrate car.

It was a work of some difficulty, but alas! it was not quickened by any groan or sigh from within such as would at once have made the suspense more painful and yet more hopeful to bear as the work went on. At last it was accomplished.

The door was forced open; the prostrate form of the hapless comtesse was lifted carefully and slowly from the bottom of the vehicle. Leila hastily removed the bonnet and veil that had fallen over the face in the shock. The features were white as a corpse, and the eyes closed as if in sleep.

"Is it possible? Can it be that she has not woken up?" exclaimed the girl, fearfully, as she drew the lady's head on her own bosom when her figure was laid on the ground.

The man who had helped her gave one long pitying glance at the girl, and then placed his finger on the suffering pulse.

"Poor girl," he said, "I suppose it's your mother? It's very sad, but she will never wake more!"

(To be Continued.)

## DRAWING HIM OUT.

A WELL-KNOWN professor went into a restaurant a few days ago and sat down, a contemporary tells us. No sooner had he been fairly seated than a learned doctor came and seated himself at the other side of the table. They were strangers, but of course two such learned men could not keep still. The doctor opened the conversation by remarking to the man of hard words, "Are not meteorological disturbances somewhat peculiar to these latitudes?"

The professor paused a moment, as he was mashing a potatoe, and replied, "It's about the same thing every year."

"In seasons of atmospheric depression," resumed the doctor, "alternating with unexpected boreal excitement and rapid changes resultant on sudden accumulations of moisture, such dispositions of the storm belt are not, in my opinion, entirely uncalculated for."

"Exactly," replied the professor.

The doctor continued in the same strain, till at length the professor was aroused to his position.

"Ah, exactly, my friend! In the ledge are vast deposits of minerals. Found in volcanic matrices and disintegrated by the upheaval of plutonic rock and semifused masses of silicious aluminous, mingled with homogeneous debris of porphyry, the molecules of kaolined feldites, with a potash base; the decomposition of the feldspar is most effected along the line of the horizontal cleavage, and necessarily the liberated oxide of manganese, combining with the percolation of the alkalis which permeate the entire mass, causes a pronounced state of polarisation, which cannot fail to account for the peculiar attraction in the vicinity."

## A NEW YEAR'S STORY.

"SEW, stitch, stitch! Will the work never be done? Work, work, work! Will this weary life never end?"

So thought Mabel Wilmot as she sat in her little third story room, where all night long she had been at work on Irene Hendrick's dress, which was to be worn that New Year's night to the grandest ball of the season.

Poor, weary, lonely Mabel! Heaven grant, gentle reader, you may never know how weary she was, as she pressed her face against the window pane, and gazed at the merry scene below.

There were skaters gliding hither and thither over the glistening ice, door bells ringing, and a "Happy New Year!" for some one on every lip. But there was no one cared whether her new year was happy or sad, unless it were some philanthropist, who wished all mankind might be happy.

For a year before it was not so. Oh, no! Then she was the beautiful daughter of the aristocratic Colonel Wilmot. Then full as many tripped up the marble steps, and were ushered into the lighted parlour, to be received by the stately Mrs. Wilmot and daughter, as called at any other mansion. But the King of Terrors entered their home, and after him, unknown to Mabel, stalked gaunt poverty.

Colonel Wilmot was killed by a fall from his horse. It was the old story. His financial affairs were in a precarious condition, what he had, or rather what the world supposed he had, was squandered by heartless lawyers or seized by grasping creditors. Proud Mrs. Wilmot retained her usual style as long as the law would allow, and strove to keep the truth from her daughter. When at last the crisis came, she sent Mabel to visit friends in a distant city, and stayed to meet grim poverty alone.

The ordeal was more than she could bear. Overworked brain and nerves at last succumbed; her strength barely lasted until she reached her daughter, and her reason left her soon after she made her child acquainted with their circumstances. She urged Mabel to avoid former friends, especially her lover, who she declared of all others would surely forsake her, and a slight from any one of their old associates seemed then by far the worst feature of their poverty.

Death was welcomed by the mother as a friend, for he took her from a life she dreaded. And poor Mabel was left alone.

No doubt Mrs. Wilmot overestimated the effect which their poverty would have on their former associates, for Mabel was indeed lovable, and had some friends who loved her for her own sweet self. She certainly did not understand Richard Hendrick. He was too wealthy to wed her for her money, and too noble to love her for her princely surroundings.

He sought, watched and waited for tidings of his loved one, but in vain. It was rumoured that she had gone abroad with friends. Society soon forgot the family; he tried to forget her.

For a time after her mother's death, Mabel remained with friends, and was urged to stay longer; but one possessed of her proud spirit could not endure dependence.

Pride and poverty! How unutterably wretched is the dwelling which ye inhabit! How many forms ye have bowed, and victims hurried to a premature grave.

She found a cheap tenement, and strove to keep body and soul together, like many others, by her needle, and thought living in the city where she had always lived, was as far removed from her former friends as though an ocean rolled between them.

Tap, tap, tap! Mabel was roused from her reverie by a messenger from Miss Hendrick.

"Young missis she say how if that frock of hers beant done now, ye'll have to take it yerself as soon as five o'clock, and if it beant there by six, she won't pay you for it."

"Very well," was all Mabel could say as she closed the door and took up her task.

Stitch, stitch! The weary hours rolled on. Five o'clock. The dress was done. At last Mabel reached Miss Hendrick's door, but ere she rang the bell her strength gave way, and she fainted on the steps.

The streets were now deserted by nearly every living being save the closely muffled policeman. One of these guardians discovered Mabel's fainting form and rang the house bell. It was answered by a servant.

"Tell Colonel Hendrick there's a woman fainted on the steps—a beggar, probably; ask him if I shall send her to the hospital."

"Send her there by all means," said Irene, who overheard the conversation.

"Not so fast, cousin," said Colonel Hendrick as he stepped from his study and rang the servants' bell. "After wishing so many of the fair ones a 'Happy New Year' to-day, I cannot send the frailest of their sex away from my door, and thereby add bitterness to her already bitter cup. How worthless are our New Year's greetings when we do not strive to help others rather than scatter seeds of misery."

Then turning to the servants, who had entered he said:

"Here, men, carry this woman up to the room over the library, next room to Miss Hendrick's, then, Sid, run for the doctor, and you, Nancy, stay with her and do all in your power for her. Cousin, I'll trouble you to see that she wants nothing which the house affords."

"Thanks! When I nurse paupers I will seek a situation in the City Hospital."

With these words Irene swept into the parlour.

"There—I've let myself out again!" thought she. "As if it were not enough to fret about my dress, which I believe will never come! I wish Dick would not waste so much money on beggars! He might allow me enough to hire a respectable dressmaker. It's well he doesn't know anything about the dress or my new diamond ear-rings, however! wouldn't his eyes snap? I suppose I must go up to see that creature, and pretend I'm sorry for my conduct. Just wait a few months until I am Mrs. Richard Hendrick—then see if I'll wait on beggars, or eat humble pie!"

In accordance with her plan, Irene assumed a very penitent demeanour and went up to Mabel's room. She found that consciousness had returned, and that the girl was sleeping. She discovered a package in the room, and at once examined its contents.

"Oh, joy! It is my new dress! Take it to my room. Nancy, and mind you say not one word to Mr. Hendrick about it; but besure you tell him that I think it my duty to give up the party to-night, and remain with this poor woman. Be a good girl, Nancy, and I'll give you all my old ribbons to-morrow."

Irene was the only daughter of Richard's uncle, a wealthy merchant. During childhood she had been indulged in every whim and caprice.

An over-fond, worldly mother doted on her beauty, and unconsciously sowed seeds in her youthful mind which grew with her growth and embittered her very existence.

She was early taught to worship Mammon. No fabrics were too costly, no gems too precious for her to wear, and she was taught to consider what the world calls a brilliant marriage the height of worldly ambition, and little was thought or said of anything beyond this world.

During the commercial depression her father's property was lost, and both parents, who were so bound up in earthly possessions, passed on and left their daughter dependent on her relatives. Colonel Hendrick found her, while travelling over historic ground, living with a distant cousin, whose family were obliged to work for daily bread. She alone declared she would not disgrace herself with menial labour, and made her own life and the lives about her miserable by bemoaning her fate. In pity of them he took her to his own home, where she was in a measure happy, for she was again surrounded with luxury, and had servants to do her bidding.

When Mabel awoke, Irene discovered her unquestionable evidence of culture; she knew before that she was beautiful. She asked her many impertinent questions, but found her extremely reticent for a "pauper."

The sick woman thanked Irene for the kindness extended by herself and her husband, and asked to be taken to her home. Irene did not care to have one who might become her rival in the house, and willing to be thought the colonel's wife, she answered:

"I will tell my husband that you desire to be removed at once to your home."

As she turned to leave the room, she was confronted by Colonel Hendrick, who had overheard her last remark.

"Where do you expect to find him?" he asked, sarcastically. Then, as if her speech were, after all, of but little consequence, he inquired about the patient.

"You can see for yourself," said Irene. "I think her a little insane, and try to humour her."

"Perhaps she may be unwilling to see me."

"I should be very happy to see and thank Col. Hendrick for his hospitality," came in low, sweet tones from Mabel's room.

"My darling long lost Mabel!"

"Richard! dear Richard!"

For a moment she permitted his embrace, then uttered a faint cry and pointed to Irene, who had wisely fainted and said:

"Your wife?"

"No, thank heaven, she is not my wife, darling."

Irene was carried to her room and left in charge of her maid, to recover and repent at leisure.

We will not relate all that passed between the two lovers. It was a meeting after each had been lost to the other for four long years, and can better be imagined than described.

Richard insisted on an immediate marriage. Mabel was so happy in again being loved that she could not resist his pleadings. She is now a happy wife.

## MARRIAGE.

"I CONGRATULATE you, my dear, supposing my information is true, on your approaching nuptials," said an elderly lady to a younger one, in the hearing of the writer, a few evenings since.

Although these words are often spoken, the affair they referred to suggested the following cogitations. There is no event in the life of man or woman, save *articulo mortis*, (if that occurrence can be really placed within the period of human existence) more important than their marriage. Nor is there any relation into which human beings enter with greater hazard

to the peace of their future lives. Of all who are to-day living in the bonds of matrimony, how few can declare that their ideas of conjugal felicity have been fully realised? As time passes on, home troubles arise that none can foresee. Nor can these be entirely avoided, however earnestly husband and wife may try to secure domestic harmony and peace. Happy in the possession of his young love, the husband may, indeed, make sacrifices for hersake, put up with numerous inconveniences, and even sometimes smile at misfortune.

The wife, on her part, may love, honour and obey the object of her first affection, the father of her children, the sharer of her anxieties, the prop on whom she relies for support and protection. And yet, in spite of their united exertions, they must have a share of troubles and annoyances for which neither party is in any way responsible. This is a proposition that stands confirmed by the experience of millions, and will be experienced by human beings while the world is a world. What those causes are which come in to disturb conjugal peace are different, of course, in different households; but it may be safely stated that few families are strangers to one or more of them at times. Now, if troubles come to the fireside unbidden, one would reasonably think that these guests were enough, without inviting others of their kind. Yet, an invitation is often given to others, numerous and disagreeable, by persons who enter into this state through avaricious or other improper motives.

There are many points to be considered, by those contemplating matrimony, in order that they may not afterwards reproach themselves for having rashly and without mature determination entered upon the duties of married life. And among those points a virtuous principle unquestionably stands foremost. If this be wanting in a man, it would be better for a young woman that she was wrapped in her peaceful shroud the day she became his wife. Much has been said and written for the guidance of young maidens, in this matter, the greater portion of the instruction coming, as indeed it ought, from the lips and pens of experienced and intelligent matrons, who are confessedly the proper persons to give directions to the younger members of their sex, on most of the questions pertaining to wedded life. These few cursory remarks may, nevertheless, be tolerated, especially as they refer only to the choice of a husband.

But what instructions, what advice, can sufficiently guard the tender and susceptible mind of girlhood against the potent charms of romantic love? When a girl enters her eighteenth year, she usually finds her spirits disturbed, her mind restless, and, sometimes, herself the victim of a pensive melancholy. These are the most apparent symptoms of the tender passion. Let us suppose the object of her love is one to whom her parents object, for good and sufficient reasons, but to whom she, guided perhaps rather by the conduct of some novel heroine, clings with unswerving devotion. The more they deary him the more she loves him. Added to her personal charms this young person has many mental embellishments, and, but for the fatal spell that overpowers her, might, perhaps, constitute the felicity of some youth of equal merit, who would glory in the possession of her virtues. But alas! at this critical period she harkens neither to the voice of reason and experience nor those of her parents and, so far, she is wrong.

But let us see to what extent her parents are right. Not to a modest youth, who wears a dress suitable to his business, who is conspicuous among his acquaintance for industry, sobriety, tenderness of heart and purity of mind, and who has enough of manly beauty to satisfy most girls, do they wish her to transfer her pure, warm affections. No, no. Why? Because the youth is a mere mechanic, and has no bank account. Oh, mighty money, thou art certainly a power in the land! They have pitched upon someone who has the reputation of being "well fixed" as the aspirant to the affections of their child.

The man, who could be the girl's father,



perhaps, as far as age goes, is encouraged to visit the house and to take every opportunity of paying his addresses. He takes her out "carriage riding" now and again, in order that he may learn in rural solitude—how little she cares about him.

Meanwhile, the "fast" young man has taken possession of her heart, and there is daily danger of her becoming his wife, in the opinion of her anxious parents, who hide their fears from the "well-fixed" suitor. When questioned on the subject of her taste, she answers:

"Oh, I know John Henry is somewhat gay now, but he loves me so well that I shall be sure to reform him."

Egregious error! No, young woman, do not indulge in this absurd fallacy! Be it known to you that a rakish lover never became a virtuous husband. If such a convert could be found he would certainly be the greatest curiosity ever known in any country. But what ground, young woman, have you for such an opinion? Do you think that one whose ideas of mortality are now so low will become a faithful husband to please a "sweetheart" whom he disregards already? No, your idol, and all like him, entertain contempt for your whole sex; nor will he ever truly esteem you, however sanguine may be your hopes.

"'Tis better to be a young man's slave than an old man's darling," do you answer? Well, the wisdom of that girl who would be any man's slave, is disputed. Why do you not wait till your judgment is sufficiently matured to enable you to discover a young man worthy of your love?

And supposing some rakes reform after marriage, who will maintain that this is a hazard which any prudent girl will run? In spite of all warning, however, we hear of this infatuated creature being wed to her "bean," and henceforth, poor thing, she may bid farewell to all earthly enjoyments. For, even if she obtains a decree of divorce, (as she most likely will, after a little time), where will be her comfort during the remainder of her days? If we consider the great number of divorces that are annually granted by the courts throughout this country, on various grounds, which might be foreseen in many cases, if the injured parties had acquired judgment before marriage, we can form an idea, though a faint one, of the number that hourly sigh for separation, through the instrumentality of our social laws or the laws of nature.

Happy is the woman who is rich in the possession of the affection of a faithful husband, though she must depend solely on his bodily and mental efforts for support, and finds herself, next to his Creator, the first occupant of his heart, which is qualified to resist the rude shocks of adversity, to which many of the best "fixed" wooers in the world are always exposed. For her, notwithstanding some of those unavoidable annoyances we have alluded to, and which are inseparable from human existence, may present themselves at times, the cup of life will have its full share of sweetness. For her home will have delights pure and peaceful. Watching the playful gambols of her children as their filial love increases, and enjoying the entire affection of her husband, chasing away all disagreeable ideas, forgetting the past and not troubling herself about the future, she can enjoy the present with a relish that can only be felt.

W. B.

#### KISSING.

Girls take naturally to kissing—there's not the slightest doubt of it. A man slides as awkwardly into his first kiss as into his elder brother's tail-coat, and his vanity is equally as great on both occasions. He considers them as steps up the ladder of life, and would have his promotions proclaimed from the housetops, and shouted from the church steeples, but such is his modesty in his family circle, that when a younger brother quietly mentions them, he looks red and feels unfaternal. The female sex ob-

tain their remarkable proficiency in kissing by perpetual study and constant practice. They are early distinguished for their aptitude in the art, for girl is not ready to kiss a baby at all hours and all seasons? This sort of kiss eventually develops into the genuine love kiss—pleasant to experience and contemplate.

#### ROMPING PLAY.

It can hardly be too often repeated that children should be allowed to romp and play in the open air, notwithstanding the inevitable wear and tear of clothing. Fathers and mothers should cease to regard their children's clothes as of more importance than their children's health, and learn to estimate at its due value the responsibility of fostering the most precious of their possessions—those living, feeling, loving little ones whose capacities of lifelong happiness are being moulded by their parents' folly. In the case of the lower classes, the school, or public nursery, where abundance of romping play is permitted, deserves the most strenuous encouragement. Children of all classes will play as they ought to play if only Nature is allowed to have her own course without let or hindrance from artificial restraints.

#### THE OLD AND THE NEW YEAR.

THE bells were ringing the New Year in and of course the old one out.

With his voice so shrill and his visage grim he was cared not much about;

But all thought with joy of the New Year born and left the old one in the cold forlorn.

Merrily pealing the New Year in again with hopes of the coming spring,

They thought not of the frost, of the snow and rain that its coming sure would bring;

But looked forward with hope to the New Year born, the sowing the seed and the ripening corn.

The New Year bringeth its hopes and fears, for hunger will pinch the poor,

And the joy of to-day may end in tears and the heart be crushed and sore;

But summer will smile on us once again and the frost will melt 'neath the spring's soft rain;

Then look forward with joy to the coming time when the earth shall bloom once more,

When the sun shall shine with its brightest ray, and cover the wide world o'er

With its flowers and fruit so fair to view, then good-bye to the Old Year and welcome New.

O. P.

#### RECURRENCE OF FASHIONS.

It is a well known fact that fashions frequently reproduce themselves. If a man's hat or a woman's wrap, be kept long enough it may be worn again, almost without alteration, in obedience to the latest law of the tailor or the milliner. We have heard of the recent marriage of a young lady who, instead of buying a new wedding dress, wore the one which her grandmother had purchased for her own wedding, seventy-five years before, finding no alteration needing to suit the present fashion.

It is interesting to note such recurrence to old types, but dress is not the only thing in which one finds ancient fashions accurately reproduced after many years. There are fashions in literature and art, and even in religion, which reappear periodically, and are mistaken by the young or the half-educated for startling novelties. And there are always plenty of people to believe that the last fashions are the best.

#### SEDENTARY PURSUITS.

PEOPLE with jaded heads are found in every rank of life, but chiefly among persons of sedentary pursuits, and among both sexes, and almost all ages above fourteen. Generally the first symptoms of the malady is discomfort during headwork in the back of the head and in the upper part of the spinal region. He is a happy man who meets this symptom with rest, and seeks in sunlight and fresh air some new investments for his nervous system, and drops every habit that does not do him positive good. If he takes to artificial stimulants for relief, he will begin a career which sooner or later will place him among the incurables, or bring him to an untimely end. Alcohol and all sleep producing drugs are most dangerous, for they mask the malady without curing it.

#### LULLABY.

BABY, sleep! The day is past,  
In the golden West

Night is shyly stealing down;  
Rest, baby, rest.

Jesus watches over thee,

Sleep, my baby, sleep;

Watches over little babes

When the shadows creep.

Slumber gently, baby mine,

On thy mother's breast,

All the birdlings now are safe

In their tiny nests;

And the clustering stars above,

Like the angel's eyes,

Vigils keep o'er baby; sleep

In the soft blue skies.

Sleep, my baby. Many a king

Gladly would lie down

For a sleep like thine, my babe,

Rank and jewelled crown

Slumber on while yet you may,

God thy future keep!

We can trust Him, little one,

Sleep, my baby, sleep.

Slumber on, the good God sent

Baby unto me,

Father, help me keep my child

From all sin stains free,

Mother's love no slumber knows

Though the shadows creep;

God is watching o'er us both.

Sleep, my baby, sleep. C. L. S.

#### LINKED LOVES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Clarice Villiers; or, What Love Feared."

#### CHAPTER XV.

A TELL-TALE WITNESS.

To tell  
How to my hand these papers fell. SCOTT.

"I CANNOT understand why Ponsonby has not called this afternoon. He knows how much I want to see him."

These words were uttered in a querulous repining tone alien to Sir Cynric Rhys's usual bluff heartiness. Perhaps there was some other cause for the admiral's annoyance beside the absence of his young favourite. For Mrs. Ap-Howel had invaded his room upon some trivial excuse, and, after inflicting her tediousness on the old man in a washy flood of inane small talk, appeared inclined to double the length of her visit and administer a second dose of the twaddle which the obtuse lady supposed to be entertaining conversation. The admiral was

far too well-bred to show by any very evident symptoms of ennui how much he was bored, but did at length manage to make Mrs. Ap-Howel comprehend that he desired to be alone.

"And so you are anxious to see the manager, my dear admiral," said the fussy little lady, as she arose, and prepared for departure. "I am going for my constitutional walk and shall pass Dinas's house, and I will call and leave word that you wish to see Mr. Ponsonby, but—my dear Sir Cynric, be cautious."

The latter injunction was delivered by Mrs. Ap-Howel in an admonitory and lugubrious tone.

"Madame," cried the admiral with a sharp inflection of inquiring reproof, "what do you mean?"

"Oh, you must excuse me, you know, Sir Cynric. I am an old friend of the family and so zealous for their interest that it sometimes renders me indiscreet. And it is so dangerous when a man who holds a confidential position of such importance is—in short, is not reliable."

"Do you allude to Valentine Ponsonby?" queried the admiral, sharply.

"Oh, I wouldn't say a word to injure the young man's prospects for the world. He is so handsome, and clever, and—and he has so much the manner of a gentleman. And I daresay he would fill an ordinary situation—something in a counting-house you know, dear Sir Cynric, on a high stool, with a pen and ruler and all that—yes, I daresay he would occupy such a post with credit, and it wouldn't make any difference about his misrepresentations of himself, and—oh, yes, and his scheming and—"

Sir Cynric Rhys stayed any farther accusation by an imperative gesture.

"No more, Mrs. Ap-Howel," he cried peremptorily. "Mr. Ponsonby is no schemer nor capable of falsehood. I would answer for him as I would for myself. I pray you do not speak another word in my presence of a similar tenor to those which you have uttered."

This uncompromising rebuke had the effect of entirely upsetting Mrs. Ap-Howel's self consequence, and she made a rapid and undignified exit from the room. Not that her opinion with regard to Valentine Ponsonby was shaken in the smallest degree. She had thought the manager a forward and presumptuous young man on his first appearance. That was crime number one. Then, beside the polished and accomplished stranger, Mrs. Ap-Howel could see that her son Henry appeared little better than an uncultivated lout. That was another item to score against Valentine.

A still graver cause of dislike on the part of the prudent and scheming matron, was that of Ponsonby's supposed secret aspirations to no less than the love of Winifrede Glendyr. This idea was not Mrs. Ap-Howel's own, but the seed of the suspicion was sowed in her mind by Miss Judith Vanneck for her own purposes. And lastly that the young man had gained the confidence and affection of Sir Cynric Rhys was an unpardonable sin.

Mrs. Ap-Howel retired to her own rooms and assuming a walking costume, set out on her promenade. Her daughters had preceded her and she would have to pass the cottage, or rather lodge, of Owain Dinas on her way to the point where she expected to meet them. When she reached the house she called with the ostensible object of making known to Valentine Ponsonby that Sir Cynric Rhys desired his presence.

The apartment which the young manager had used as a study and a business room since he had taken up his quarters with Owain, was on the ground floor of the little house and had a pleasant outlook through its rosetree wreathed window on a tiny grass-plot which old Dinas, in imitation of his betters at the Castle, pompously termed his "lawn." A broad gravelled footpath ran along the front of the house, and as Mrs. Ap-Howel traversed this in order to reach the front door, she necessarily passed the window of Valentine's study.

The casement was thrown widely open, admitting freely the soft May zephyrs. As

Mrs. Ap-Howel passed it she almost unconsciously cast a glance into the apartment. It was untenanted she could see. Drawn up close to the window was the young man's oak writing table, with its nests of drawers. Several account books and bundles of docketed papers lay ranged side by side as if ready for Valentine's attention upon his return, and an ordinary pad of buff blotting paper flanked the pen tray.

Why was it that a thing so insignificant as this wretched pad caused the visitor to arrest her footsteps? She could not have herself answered that question. Perhaps it was that the upper sheet of the blotting-paper which had become partially detached and was fluttering to and fro in the wind, had caught her eye and drawn her attention. Perhaps it was that the busy fiend who is always ready to seize his evil opportunity worked on her heart at the instant. However that may be, the fact remains that Mrs. Ap-Howel did stop and regard that sheet of fluttering paper with an inexplicable interest, an interest which grew upon her, which dominated her.

Slowly and with her eyes rivetted upon the agitated sheet—slowly as if impelled by something beyond and outside her own volition, Mrs. Ap-Howel leaned over the low sill of the casement; slowly her hand was extended into the room, touched the fluttering sheet, closed gently upon it and gave one dexterous snatch; the next moment the soft leaf was crumpled up and thrust into a pocket of her jacket and, her face burning red, the woman threw around her the apprehensive glance which showed surely that she held herself for that which she was in truth—a thief!

Only a worthless sheet of spoiled blotting-paper, that was all. But it had led the wife of one of the proudest squires in the Principality across the border which separates honesty from crime. How her heart beat as a heavy step scrunched on the gravel at a little distance! What an escape she had had! She hurried on to the front door, and as she reached it encountered old Owain himself, who had come from the opposite direction, face to face.

Dinas bowed profoundly. He had no particular liking or esteem for Mrs. Ap-Howel herself, but his deepest reverence was yielded to the name she bore as one of the most ancient and historic in Wales. Mrs. Ap-Howel made known her errand in much briefer speech than was habitual to her. She was embarrassed by the witness to her guilt which lay perdu in her pocket.

"Mr. Ponsonby will be fery sorry when he do come back," replied the old man with his characteristic deliberation. "Oh, yes, indeed."

"Oh, he is away from home. Well, please deliver the message when he returns, Dinas."

"Yes, indeed, and I will do that! But Mr. Ponsonby is not expected until the evening. He was going for a long ride, and when he do come back it will be too late to see the admiral, and Mr. Ponsonby will be fery sorry. Yes, indeed."

Mrs. Ap-Howel's fidgetted nervously during the old man's speech. Her hand sought the pocket, and her gloved finger and thumb were busy mechanically rubbing the corner of the wisp of soft paper into little rolled up atoms. But she quickly effected her escape, and the more easily that Owain did not like her sufficiently well to inflict much of his ordinary garrulity upon her.

Mrs. Ap-Howel did not feel altogether at her ease until she had cleared the precincts of Dinas's little domain. Even then she walked on with a step much more rapid than was consonant with her ordinary rather ridiculous assumption of dignity. But while passing along a secluded path, which led through a fir plantation at some distance from the castle, she could no longer resist the desire to look at this wretched scrap of waste paper which had mysteriously led her into a crime.

She drew it from her pocket. She had frayed away a big corner of it in her agitation, but she now carefully spread out the remainder of the crumpled sheet. Its surface was covered with a quantity of bold black strokes. It held the re-

versed copy of some writing in a bold masculine hand. The ends of the lines were missing, but what remained were in the handwriting of Valentine Ponsonby, and were easy to read.

It did not take Mrs. Ap-Howel long to master their import. When she had done so she smiled triumphantly, then carefully folded the paper and placed it in a small porte-monnaie.

"Now, I know what impelled me to take it," she whispered. "It was an inspiration of Providence!"

And in place of seeming a shabby crime, the act of abstracting the paper appeared now meritorious.

Many others beside Mrs. Ap-Howel have been equally ready to pronounce acts evil in themselves, but productive of benefit to their perpetrators, to be instances of heaven's peculiar care for them. The conqueror has so solaced his soul when gazing at a sanguinary battle field, and in such wise has the assassin laid a flattering unction on his soul while gloating over the last agonies of the victim expiring at his feet.

The lady's desire to extend her perambulation until she should join her daughters seemed suddenly to have vanished. She turned her face Caerlanward, and rapidly as she had reached the spot where she then found herself, her return journey to the castle was even more quickly achieved.

Her first care was to seek out Miss Vanneck. Mrs. Ap-Howel knew that both Mrs. Glendyr and her daughter were absent, and after some search she found the governess extended in prone indolence on the most luxurious couch in Winifrede's boudoir, lazily perusing a yellow-covered French novel.

Judith was a privileged person with Mrs. Ap-Howel, and the girl both knew and took advantage of it. She looked up indifferently, and let her book slip from her taper fingers to the floor, but did not otherwise alter her posture. She could see that the fussy Welshwoman was immensely excited, but was accustomed to her mercurial moods and had ceased even to derive amusement from them.

"Oh, my dear Miss Vanneck," cried Mrs. Ap-Howel, "jump up! I have such news for you. We are right! I always knew that we were right."

"Of course, my dear Mrs. Ap-Howel," responded the young lady, languidly, assuming a sitting posture. "How could we ever be otherwise? But on what point have our infallible judgments been verified now? Is it a question of the last Parisian mode in robes? Or is it that the curate will espouse Mrs. Linklater, the frisky widow, instead of Miss Powys, the fat heiress?"

"Nonsense, Judith," said Mrs. Ap-Howel, vehemently. "It is a matter of far greater importance. I have found him out."

Emphasis on the last sentence tremendous.

"Gracious, how oracular you are! But I'm glad to hear he's discovered. Only who is he? Is it Friar, Mrs. Glendyr's lapdog, who has been lost for three entire hours? Or is it old Mr. Dyffryn, who will insist on cheating at cards?"

"Friar—Dyffryn!" cried Mrs. Ap-Howel, peevishly. "No, indeed! It is some one of much more importance. It is that dangerous schemer, Valentine Ponsonby!"

It was Miss Vanneck's turn to become excited now. She sprang to her feet, and her face flushed eagerly, although there was some lingering distrust of her companion's assumed discovery apparent in the dubious tone in which she asked:

"Valentine Ponsonby! Ah, what is it?"

With a look of conscious triumph, Mrs. Ap-Howel drew forth her wallet, extracted the piece of folded paper from it, and held it out to her companion.

"What do you say to that?"

Judith took the piece of paper and ran her eyes over it rapidly, while they sparkled with malicious satisfaction. Then she read it a second time more deliberately.

"Good, glorious!" she ejaculated, clapping her delicate hands together gleefully. "This will settle Mr. Ponsonby's affair definitively."

"So I think."



"Think! There isn't a shadow of doubt about it. It will decide the matter in one quarter at least."

"And that is—"

"With Winnie. Whatever danger in that direction there may have been from this aspiring young gentleman is entirely removed. This is a splendid discovery."

Mrs. Ap-Howel's face was radiant with success.

"And the admiral?" she queried.

Miss Vanneek looked dubious.

"I am not so sure there. But that does not matter. If Winefreda has this paper it will be a talisman of protection for her at least. Leave the rest to her."

"I shall not feel happy until the scheming pretender is turned out of the castle by the servants."

"Do not push the advantage too far. Ponsonby will now be rendered incapable of further mischief. That is enough. Let him retain his business position and confine his aspirations to his own duties. Don't you agree with me, dear Mrs. Ap-Howel? He is young. We do not desire his ruin."

"And you think—"

"I am sure that so far as Winnie is concerned this discovery has removed all danger."

"How shall she be made acquainted with it?" queried Mrs. Ap-Howel.

"Can you not hand it to her?"

The elder lady hesitated to reply, and her countenance betrayed some inward trouble.

"I had much rather not do so," she said at last, "if anyone else would undertake the duty. You see I should place myself in rather an invidious position."

"I do not see it," Miss Vanneek replied, coldly. "You are an old friend of the family."

"That is true. Still—still if anyone else would undertake the kind and necessary duty of opening Winefreda's eyes to the true character of this audacious adventurer, I would gladly relinquish it to—her."

Mrs. Ap-Howel made a long pause before she added the last word. Who the "her" meant Judith Vanneek knew very well, although she chose to profess obtuseness.

"Really, I cannot see who is so suitable to reveal this plot as the discoverer of it—yourself," she responded, with an affectation of indifference. "Ah, by the way, how did you find it out? How did you come into possession of this incriminating evidence?" and she held out the piece of blotting paper which she had still retained.

Mrs. Ap-Howel, woman of the world as she was, coloured painfully beneath Miss Vanneek's inquiring eye. She felt that even to this girl whom she was anxious to make a partial accomplice, she could not disclose the full extent of her own meanness and treachery. She saw no alternative but to shelter her theft by a deliberate falsehood.

"I was passing the little lawn before Dinas's house," she said, "with a message from the admiral to this young man of whom we speak. That piece of paper was fluttering about in one of the laurels and was blown into my face. Naturally, I put up my hand and caught it, and then, from some idle motive, looked at it. Of course, I could estimate its importance at a glance."

"Of course. But Mr. Ponsonby must be a very careless man for a plotter to throw such condemnatory evidence as this away."

"The window of his room was open and the paper had probably been carried out by the wind."

Miss Vanneek had lowered her eyes while Mrs. Ap-Howel was speaking, and now suddenly raised them and met the speaker's agitated look with a glance of peculiar meaning, which the elder lady entirely comprehended. It seemed to say that the governess perfectly understood her.

"You know what friends we have always been, dear Miss Vanneek," Mrs. Ap-Howel recommenced, in an insinuating tone. "I am sure you would do anything to aid me, and to save poor Winnie from danger. The girl will pay far more

attention to the matter if you bring it before her than if I do, because you have great influence over her. I will not be ungrateful in my turn. Perhaps, even my poor power may aid in advancing your interests in a certain quarter. Ap-Howel takes great interest in Mr. Oscar Glendyr, and—"

She looked mysteriously at Judith.

"Perhaps it will be well that I should undertake this painful duty," said the latter, slowly. "As you say, I have some influence with Winefreda. Yes, I will show her this."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE RETURN.

The ivy twigs were torn and frayed,  
As if some climber's steps to aid.

THE incidents detailed in the preceding chapter were occurring at about the time that Valentine Ponsonby sat down with his sketch-book before the Druid's Castle. Some hours later, when evening had fallen over Caerlan, as Owain Dinas, who had escaped for a space from the castle, to return home and have a cosy chat with his old dame after his duties as butler in preparing for dinner had been put in train, was telling his spouse that Mrs. Glendyr was getting anxious at the protracted absence of Winefreda the distant sound of a horse's hoofs could be heard on the hard gravelled drive which led up to the mansion.

"There is Miss Winefreda, at last, bless her!" cried the old man. "The mare must be dead, beat by her pace. Yes, indeed! And where is the groom, I do wonder? I can only hear the footing of one horse! But it is time I was off, Jenny. Dinner will be served very quick now. Yes, truly!"

The old man was just about to leave the room when the door opened and Valentine Ponsonby entered. Jenny Dinas screamed, and Owain gave vent to a startled ejaculation as the young man appeared.

For Valentine staggered rather than walked into the room, and reeling across the floor, sank heavily on the little stiff hair cloth-covered sofa, which graced the Dinas's "best room." The young man's face was deadly pale. There was a deep gash across his right temple and his cheeks were lacerated by numerous scratches. His left hand hung down limply and slow, heavy drops of blood fell from a deep cut in the palm.

"Good heavens, what has happened, Mr. Ponsonby? Shall I send Davis to town for the doctor? Jenny, be very quick and fetch water and brandy and hartshorn and—"

"Stay, stay, Owain!" cried Valentine with a faint smile. "Do not be alarmed! It is nothing. If your good wife will provide me with some rag to bandage my hand, I will go to my chamber and wash away this 'filthy witness,' as the great bard hath it, and by-the-bye, Owain, I think I will accept your offer of the brandy."

In spite of his evident efforts at self-control the young man's speech was broken and his voice unsteady. Both Owain and Mrs. Dinas disappeared, but returned with appliances for their lodger's necessities with an alacrity wonderful for people so aged. Mrs. Dinas bore basin, water, sponges, and towels, and her husband a bottle of very particular cognac, such as he seldom exhibited.

"Ah, yes, indeed, Mr. Ponsonby," he said as he poured out a glassful of the stimulant and handed it to the young man, "prandy is the very best thing to bring a man to. But what was the matter, sir? Was it poachers or highwaymen or was it—"

"No, no! My horse took fright at something in the hedgerow and threw me."

The confession seemed to come reluctantly from Mr. Ponsonby's pale lips.

"Threw you, sir—you. Good heavens, I would have said that was impossible. Such a sent ass you do have too! Threw you! Why, indeed, and I was never thrown in my life, however many times I followed the hounds."

"That is a pleasure yet to come, Owain," said the young man with a faint smile.

"Pleasure! It is a pleasure I can do without however. Yes, in truth. But there is no bones broken? You will not haf the doctor, sir?"

"By no means, Owain, I shall be all right in a few minutes."

"And the horse, Mr. Ponsonby. I did say to Jenny that he was dead beat, I could hear that. Yes, indeed! Is his knees broken? Ah, and I did think it was Miss Winefreda's mare at the walk."

"Miss Glendyr! Is she not at home?"

"Ah, no! She is not come back yet. Yes, I can hear the mare now. Yes, indeed." And the old man threw open the window. The hoof beats of an animal were now plainly audible, but it was pushing on at a smart trot.

"That is not Miss Glendyr's mare," cried Owain, in great distress. "No, indeed! That is the groom. Good heavens, what has happened to our young lady? It is to the castle I must go!"

"Give me your arm, Owain," cried Valentine, rising feebly but resolutely. "We will go together."

They found the family at the castle in a state of agitation. Winefreda had not returned, and the groom, when interrogated, could only inform Mrs. Glendyr that his young mistress had despatched him home by another route in order that he should carry some wine and delicacies to a sick cottage girl, stating that she should go on.

The entrance of Valentine and Owain and the haggard and almost ghastly appearance of the former diverted for the moment the attention of all to the young man. He explained his own mishap briefly, then added:

"I learn from Owain that Miss Glendyr has not yet returned. It is very extraordinary. I happened to meet her during the afternoon, after she had sent the groom to Lettice Johns, and she said she was returning homeward and intended to make a detour to visit the Druid's Castle, and perhaps ascend. I endeavoured to dissuade her from the latter project."

There was a strange look of embarrassment on Ponsonby's open countenance as he spoke—the expression of the lover of truth who, by apparently inexorable circumstances, is forced into the hateful path of falsehood. Mrs. Glendyr was terribly affrighted at Valentine's intelligence and for once forgot her affectation.

"My daughter on that horrible rock!" she cried, hysterically. "Oh, what can have happened? She has fallen! She is dead! Oh, Mr. Ponsonby, how could you have allowed her to go into such peril alone? Oh, my child—my child!" and Mrs. Glendyr burst into a passion of tears.

"Be calm, madame," said Valentine, soothingly, "and all will yet be well. I am sure Miss Glendyr is too brave and too cool-headed to place herself in any needless peril."

"That seems rather like nonsense, Ponsonby, doesn't it?" interrupted Oscar Glendyr, excitedly and with some brusqueness. "You are brave and cool-headed, but you, it appears, cannot always escape, and Winnie is only a girl after all."

The old admiral appeared little less distressed than his daughter, and very genuine alarm and sorrow sat on Judith Vanneek's face. Perhaps her heart smote her at the thought that even in the moment of her pitiful scheming the girl who had been her pupil in youth, her friend of later years, might have been lying a cold, disfigured corpse. And the ghastly appearance Valentine of perhaps served to bring this melancholy thought home to the governess's heart. It may be that this also accounted for the look of unmistakable sympathy which Judith cast on the young man.

There was one of the group, however, whose regard of Valentine was anything but sympathetic. This was Lord Fitzvesci. He had thrown a sudden searching and suspicious glance at the young man, when the latter spoke of his meeting with Miss Glendyr, and now stood observing him in a furtive, moody manner.



## [IMPORTANT INTELLIGENCE.]

"Would it not be well that you gentlemen took horse and went in search of Miss Glendyr?" queried Ponsonby, presently. "And the grooms also? I fear it is useless for me to proffer my aid for I could scarcely cross the saddle."

Oscar, Henry Ap-Howel and the other young men hailed the suggestion. Nor was the viscount slow to embrace it, although farther exasperated that it had not proceeded from himself. But before they could proceed to put their purpose into action, a footman rushed in breathlessly.

"Miss Glendyr has returned, madame," he said, addressing the lady of the castle. "She has just alighted."

A sudden light flashed in Valentine Ponsonby's eyes, then the pallor of his face became intensified.

"With your permission, Mrs. Glendyr," he said "I will retire. I am somewhat shaken, and only fit to rest."

He walked across the spacious room steadily, but staggered as he neared its entrance and caught at the door-post for support. Owain Dinas and Oscar both ran to give their aid, at the same moment Winefrede, still in her riding habit, appeared at another door. The girl desired to reassure her mother and the others of her safety before staying to make any change of toilette. She threw one quick glance at Valentine supported by Owain and her brother, then crossing the room with a firm step she cried:

"Oh, Mr. Ponsonby, you have sustained serious injury! How I—"

Valentine threw her a warning glance and interrupted her hurried ejaculations.

"Yes, I have been thrown from my horse and am somewhat shaken; but it is nothing, I assure you, Miss Glendyr. A night's repose will set me right. By the way, I heartily regret that when I met you this afternoon I did not dissuade you from your projected visit to the Druid's Castle."

And courteously and calmly bidding the heiress good night, Valentine, with the aid of Owain's supporting arm, left the room. Wine-

frede's broken words and agitated manner had not been lost upon Lord Fitzvesci and in no degree tended to diminish his dislike to the manager.

Later on Miss Glendyr was of course under the necessity of relating her adventure of the evening. In this recital she simply stated the facts, with the important omission however, that she made no mention of Valentine Ponsonby's presence on the rock. She had at once comprehended the young man's cue in his parting words.

Winefrede's hearers readily sympathised with her details of her terror when she awoke and found herself alone on the rocky platform of the Druid's Castle, and considerable curiosity was evinced both as to the cause of the disappearance of the ladder, and her ultimate escape from the temporary captivity.

Both were readily explained. Winefrede had not been long upon the rocky plateau when loud voices hailed her from below. They were those of some of the herdsmen and shepherds of the valley. A stone was thrown up to the girl, having a piece of packthread attached. With this she was able to draw up a substantial rope, the noose at the end of which Winefrede was easily able to attach to a secure rocky projection.

Up this rope an agile young peasant ascended bearing the end of the lost ladder, this made fast, Winefrede had no difficulty in accomplishing the descent, and having rewarded her deliverers liberally, regained her long captive and impatient horse and rapidly made her way homeward.

The evidence of the herdsman as to the cause of the disappearance of the ladder entirely exonerated Valentine Ponsonby in the eyes of the heiress. One of them was driving his cattle home from the upland pastures to a farmstead in the valley. Among the herd was a young bull who was somewhat intractable. This animal leading the herd as usual, took alarm at some slight cause, and rushing on madly, caused a general stampede of the herd.

In their passage one of the heifers came into rude collision with the ladder, entangling her horns in the supple but tenacious rounds of it and tearing it forcibly from its upper moorings to the rock above. Unable to disentangle itself from the strange encumbrance, which despite its length was remarkably light, the animal's original terror rose to panic and in its frantic flight, still cumbered with the ladder, the beast had plunged into the grove, causing thereby that agitation of the brushwood which had been visible to Winefrede and Valentine from their elevated station on the rock. Such was Miss Glendyr's relation. But she had wilfully made one important omission relative to a fact told her by her rescuers.

When the herdsman had finally secured the exhausted beast he found the ladder considerably damaged by its rough usage. This seemed of little account, for the morrow would do very well for its repair and reinstating. But not long after, as he was folding his cattle, a stranger, whose coat was drawn up to his ears and whose soft felt hat was slouched over his eyes, had come up hastily and in an agitated manner informed the man that he had seen a lady upon the rock making signals of distress, and that farther he had gone to the foot of the precipice, hailed her, and ascertained that she was Miss Winefrede Glendyr of Caerlau Castle. Thereupon the man had collected some of his mates, had rapidly mended the engine of ascent, and repaired in hot haste to the Druid's Castle.

But the herdsman too made a material omission in his story. He did not tell Miss Glendyr that he was at first incredulous of the stranger's tale, and had positively refused to take action thereupon, nor that it was not until the stranger had slipped a couple of sovereigns into his hand that the herdsman's zeal was awakened. Winefrede Glendyr had no difficulty in identifying the muffled-up stranger with Mr. Valentine Ponsonby.

(To be Continued.)





[STRICKEN DOWN.]

## UNDER A LOVE CHARM;

OR,

### A SECRET WRONG.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Christine's Revenge; or, O'Hara's Wife,"**"The Mystery of His Love; or, Who Married Them?" &c., &c.*

#### CHAPTER XXXII.

##### ATHELSTANE'S MARRIAGE.

Death is king and vivat rex!  
Dance a measure on the stones.  
Madame, if I know your sex  
By the fashion of your bones.

LEONTINE, the bride of half-an-hour, stands in the grand old London square outside the grand old mansion a widow. On the rich carpet spread from the steps and across the pavement she stands pale as her dead bridegroom!

The old baronet has been smitten down suddenly by the great reaper. He lies in a heap in his carriage—dead! His servants lift the body out carefully and carry it into the house. How had it happened that Leontine, the bride, knew nothing until she stood in the street? Then looking back she saw her bridegroom's ghastly face and bent form, and the shock was too much for her overwrought frame.

She too was carried into the house fainting and quite unconscious for a while. When she awoke to the realities of life, she was sensible of a feeling of relief beyond expression. At the same time her tender, compassionate soul was filled with sorrow and pity for the generous old man who had sincerely loved her, and who had loaded herself and her relatives with benefits.

Poor Leontine, absorbed in her own gloomy thoughts, and anxious to escape the flatteries and endearments of her bridegroom, had looked tearfully and resolutely out of the window on the side of the carriage near to her, and she had not noticed the silence of poor Sir Peter. When the carriage stopped and the footman assisted her to descend, she looked back, and saw the baronet, who had fallen back against the other window and was quite dead.

It was indeed the opinion of the two great doctors who were called in that Sir Peter must have been stone dead five minutes before he reached the house in Cavendish Square. A post-mortem examination was made, and death was found to have resulted from a heart complaint to which the old baronet had been long subject. The funeral followed the wedding within five days.

The heir-at-law, a Sir Nicholas Lingham, sent down his executors and looked up the property generally. As for Leontine, she shut herself up in her own room to weep and to pray. To her, poor child, it seemed as if the high stakes for which she had played the desperate and despairing game of marriage with an old man of sixty odd years were to be removed entirely from her.

She supposed in her innocent heart that Sir Nicholas would come and take away from her all the money and the presents that old Sir Peter had given her, and that her poor father and the children would be obliged to return to poverty and obscurity.

It was the day after the funeral Eva Rodney had taken upon herself to have mourning made for the lovely young widow, and Eva, when she went unceremoniously into the room which Leontine occupied, found the girl widow engaged in writing a letter on which her tears rained fast.

Leontine looked lovelier than a poet's day-dream in her deep graceful mourning garb. Eva stood and looked at her for a moment, then she said in her brisk, bustling way:

"Don't cry like a schoolgirl over a sum that

won't come right. Cheer up, Leontine. Do you know that you are one of the richest widows in England?"

"No," said Leontine. "I thought I was poor again."

"Nothing of the kind. Mr. Letchworth, the family lawyer, is here, and is talking with papa. He is appointed the sole executor, and he says that every farthing and every acre that old Sir Peter could by any possibility leave away from Sir Nicholas he has left to you. This house and lands in Yorkshire to the value of twenty-five thousand a year, besides two hundred thousand pounds in Bank of England shares. You have all the jewels, pictures and plate at Hazlemere that are not heirlooms. Sir Peter could not leave you Hazlemere, but he has said in his will that he wished he could."

Leontine stared in amaze at Eva.

"Do you not believe me, Lady Lingham?" said Eva, gaily. "Do you know that now you have the power to turn us all out of this fine old house as soon as you like?"

"I hope you will never go away," said Leontine, extending her hand to Eva.

"You don't seem to realise the fact, my pretty Lady Lingham," said Eva, kissing the fair cheek of Leontine, "that you are one of the richest widows in England. Old Sir Peter made his will in such a way that if he had died even before he married you, you would still have inherited all his fortune. He knew, poor old man, that his days were numbered. Excuse my telling you, my dear, that I consider you the luckiest girl in the whole world."

But Leontine's heart was sad and sore, for she said "that henceforth her life must be empty of the hopes of youth." She was not going to pine away her days in useless regrets, but she felt that the one boon for which she would have given the whole world was denied her. She would have counted it bliss, this romantic Leontine, to have married Athelstane Rodney and have dwelt with him in a garret, but she learnt that evening that his

marriage with Clemence was fixed for that day fortnight.

"And we are all invited to the wedding," said Eva. You as well, Lady Lingham, but they say the affair is to be a very quiet one. Very few except relations on both sides will be present. The happy pair are to spend the honeymoon in Paris."

Leontine listened with a dull pain at her heart.

"It will be hard," she said to herself, "to meet him the husband of another. How hard it will be then to stifle this mad love in my heart, for I shall be free. I shall not owe duty to any other only my self-respect, and my sense of right will induce me to go away and live where I can never—never meet him again!"

And the days went rapidly which brought the morning of the marriage nearer and nearer.

"Under a Love Charm," oh, madness of those bygone days, when Athelstane had sworn that come what would, Clemence Melrose should be his bride. How bitterly he repented the strange, rash vow, which positively seemed about to fulfil itself, and without any supreme effort of his own. Now he had once worshipped his promised bride, and now he would have given all he possessed to have been able to retreat with honour from the solemn obligations which bound him to become the husband of Clemence.

Eva Rodney had been absent, no one knew where, for several hours in each day during the last week, and Leontine (who still remained in the house in Cavendish Square for the present, for she had much business still with lawyers' deeds and settlements to attend to) somehow associated her absence with the mysterious man whom they had met in the Seven Dials, and whom Miss Rodney had sent to a charitable institution with a letter of recommendation from herself.

That man had spoken of the Melrose family, and Leontine fancied that he, perhaps, had some secret to disclose which would prevent the marriage of Athelstane with Miss Rodney. Leontine did not know the story which Eva had been told of the marriage of Clemence, but she had heard vague reports, and instinct told her that Eva loved her cousin and regarded his approaching wedding day with horror. Unfortunately though it seemed as if she could not obtain any distinct proof of what she went to seek for every day.

Eva returned in a cab in the afternoon, looking pale, dispirited, and almost despairing. Meanwhile the day—the dreaded day—of the wedding drew near, and custom, fashion, society, the world demanded of Eva Rodney that she should be polite and friendly to her cousin's expected bride. Family preparations, on a very grand scale for a wedding breakfast, were made at the house in Park Lane, although the invited guests were only to consist of a few of the friends and relations on both sides.

Lady Lingham was invited despite the obscurity of her antecedents, because she was associated so closely now with the Rodneys, and had become the intimate friend of Eva. The lovely widowed bride was to wear an exquisite toilette of mingled white and black in the richest satins.

Eva wore a becoming toilette of opal-coloured silk. She, with Celia Melrose, and other young ladies, daughters of a Colonel Gregory, distant cousins of Lady Melrose, was to help to form the staff of bridesmaids. The day arrived. It was a bright, warm morning in the merry, treacherous month of May. Organs were playing; girls and women were offering violets and primroses and lilies of the valley for sale.

London streets seemed filled with sunshine, music, and flowers. The bride sat before a large cheval glass, and her attendants were busy in twining white flowers in her pale gold hair. She was enveloped from throat to heels in a long, white embroidered robe. Her bridal dress and jewels were spread out for her on a wide table in an adjoining room. There was nothing of a bride's timidity in the manner of the lovely

Clemence. She was lively, merry, full of fun and sparkling humour. Her glorious brown eyes shone, her cheeks were brilliant with the pink glow of health.

"It is after all a grand thing to become a married wife," she said, with a radiant smile. "As Mrs. Athelstane Rodney I may do all kinds of things that as Clemence Melrose I would not have dared to do."

At that moment Lady Melrose, who had been standing before a little cabinet arranging some flowers in a large vase, turned round and faced her beautiful daughter. There was a half frown on the lady's handsome face.

"Clemence, beware, my love. As Mrs. Athelstane Rodney more will be expected of you as regards decorum than even as Miss Melrose."

Clemence answered her mother with a mocking laugh. Then she said:

"I suppose my darling bridegroom will expect me to be decorous. He has some very strict notions, has my adorable Athelstane. I hope he will never have cause, dearest mother, to blush for his charming bride. I feel in excellent spirits, not in the least alarmed at the ordeal that is before me. I have heard of good people—bad people I mean—who bore up wonderfully till the day—the very morning of their execution dawned upon them. They slept well, partook of an excellent breakfast of beefsteak with an excellent appetite, and then they allowed themselves to be pinioned with a sweetly amiable smile irradiating their countenances, and so they walked on jauntily until all at once the scaffold came in sight, and then their brave hearts failed them. Ha! ha! ha! poor things! They cried and struggled and fainted and had to be killed without manifesting any dignity. I only hope that when I see the parson and the open book and the stained glass church window that I shan't suddenly turn rative and try to escape, mamma. Do you think I shall?"

"I wish, Clemence, you would try to be a little more dignified, my love," said Lady Melrose, sadly, and the mother left the room holding her head erect and looking sorrowfully indignant.

Clemence burst into a peal of the gayest, merriest laughter.

"My wedding day! Great merciful heaven, must it be?"

The bridegroom, paler than the bride, stood attired in the conventional costume that fashion demands in the dining-room of the house in Cavendish Square. Since Leontine's widowhood he has not spoken to her once alone. Living in the same house with the woman he loves, and she rich, free and devoted to him, how cruel seems that Fate which separates them and decrees that he shall take to wife a lady beautiful indeed as the flashing lightning is beautiful; beautiful as the bosom of the treacherous ocean when it sparkles in the sunshine; beautiful as the many tinted iceberg when the crimson rays of sunset light it up with gorgeous colour; beautiful as all these, but also dangerous as any of them—that he knows and feels by an unerring instinct.

What is the mystery of her past? Does she even love him as the bride should love her bridegroom? And a strange mystic voice in the deep of his heart answers no. And how he had worshipped that girl a few short months ago! Had he not vowed some unholy vow that come what would she should be his wife? And that if she married another man he would kill himself? And now it seemed that the Fates had granted his prayer. It was indeed as if the fulfilment of his wish was to fulfil his oath.

"Bound to marry her?" he said to himself—"in honour bound. I have asked her hand of her parents, and been accepted. She has told me that she loves me. As for this tale of her marriage with the Frenchman, I can't prove one word of it. I have scoured the farmer's people in the county of Worcester, where the birth of her child is said to have taken place.

They laugh the idea to scorn, and deny everything. No, I see no hope; I must marry her; do my duty by her; try to make her happy; try to re-awaken in my soul at least some portion of the love I once had for her."

Soon after this Athelstane started alone in a carriage for the church in Hanover Square. His cousin Eva with Lady Lingham followed in another carriage. Arrived at the church he waited for the arrival of the bride and bridesmaids.

The church was crowded with spectators. There had been no public announcements whatever of the approaching marriage, which for some reason the Melrose family wished to keep very quiet. But notwithstanding that fact the news spread as such news always does, and the church was quite filled with people anxious to gaze on the enchanting loveliness of Clemence. At last she arrived—she and her bridesmaids, and a few minutes afterwards Athelstane stood before the altar rails with his bride.

His voice as he made the responses did not sound like his own. He was very sensible of a strange feeling of unreality which seemed to him to pervade the whole ceremony—all the circumstances of his surroundings. It was the same, quite the same when he walked down the aisle of the church with the snowy arm of Clemence linked within his own. It was as if he had wedded a fairy bride or a beautiful witch from some enchanted castle of old story. There positively seemed nothing real in Clemence even when, seated side by side with her in the luxurious carriage, they were driven towards Park Lane.

He put out his hand and grasped the ivory satin robe with its priceless lace trimmings and its trailing lilies, and when he found that these were real, he was sensible of an odd feeling of astonishment. She glanced at him slyly out of the corners of her glittering brown eyes, slyly, mockingly.

"Not as a young bride glances at her bridegroom," he said to himself.

At last he seized her beautiful hand and raised it to his lips reverently, and the bride burst into a mocking laugh, the sound of which recalled to the mind of Athelstane those days when at Wolvermoor she had so tortured his loving heart and ridiculed him.

"Do you not care for me, Clemence?" he asked, sadly.

"Immensely," she answered. "I adore you, perfectly adore you, otherwise you may depend upon it, my dear Athelstane, that I would never have taken the trouble to marry you."

But there was a terrible suspicion of banter in her tone, so that Athelstane shrank from the idea of pressing his lips to hers.

"Here we are at the house," said the bride. "Now for the wedding toasts and sentiments. I hope they won't be very tedious, don't you?"

Athelstane gave a tacit assent, and soon he was seated next to his lovely bride. Champagne flowed like water, as some reporter in some country newspaper averred at the end of the week. Toasts and speeches, chicken and champagne, blushes, smiles, and a few tears. Are not these the usual adjuncts of a wedding? They were all at this one in Park Lane, only Clemence did not shed the tears. More than one person present noticed her hard, glittering and unnatural smile, and commented on it afterwards.

Athelstane had no appetite. Opposite to him sat Leontine, the widowed bride, in her exquisite costume of black and white satins and laces. Her eyes met Athelstane's, and the piteous, yearning, yet patient, enduring expression in their pure depths haunted him like a prophecy.

"I feel desperate," he said to himself, and he drank more freely of wine than was his usual custom.

When the hour came for departure, it really seemed to him that his head whirled. He asked himself what the strange, ghostly feeling was that possessed him, when he stepped into the carriage with his bride, while mountains of her luggage loaded the roof.

"Where are we going to?" was the first



question of Clemence, when they were alone. "To the world's end; to Scotland; to Fairyland; to the moon! I have been there once, and it was—oh, so cold!"

She was attired in a lovely travelling costume of rich green velvet, and the day was warm, but at that moment she shivered and looked pale as any lily.

"Don't talk unreal stuff, my love, on this our wedding day," said poor Athelstane, affectionately to his wife.

But Clemence laughed a most unnatural laugh.

"It is true," she said, dreamily. "It was colder there than you can imagine. Tell me, then, did you think I had always lived in this dull planet that we call earth? Nothing of the kind. I have seen more, and heard more—aye, and I know more than half the philosophers under the sun! I am not as other women!"

As she spoke she fixed her great bright eyes in a strange fashion on her husband's face.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

"DIE! DIE! DIE!"

Good morrow to the day so fair,  
Good morrow, sir, to you;  
Good morrow to my own torn hair,  
Reddened all with dew.

THE MAD MARI'S SONG.

"I DON'T like you to talk in that way, my darling, nor to look at me so," said Athelstane to his lovely bride.

They were pacing up and down the platform at Victoria Station. The train stood close, but would not start for another ten minutes.

"I can't help, my dear husband, what you like, I must talk according to the mood I am in, and I am afraid that is not an amiable one this afternoon, to tell you the plain, unvarnished truth. I feel ill, cross, tired. I wish Doctor Finucan were here."

Athelstane stifled something very like an oath.

"I hate that man!" said he, passionately. "There is a mystery about him which I cannot fathom."

"Take my advice, don't attempt to fathom it," said the beautiful bride, with a light laugh. "I only know that he has lived so long with us as mamma's family doctor, and we have all become so accustomed to go to him with our various ailments, that I for one feel quite nervous when he is out of the way, that is if I have such a strange feeling of faintness as I have to-night."

"Here is your scent-case," said Athelstane, alarmed, "and there is some brandy in my travelling case."

"Thanks. Let us take our places, and—give me the brandy if you don't mind, I really do feel very faint and queer."

The lovely Clemence sprang quickly into a carriage before Athelstane could offer her help, and she sank back among the cushions with an air of extreme fatigue.

"If you feel ill, my dear, we had better postpone our journey," said Athelstane. "Let us return to Park Lane and Doctor Finucan, since you have such confidence in him, and as a doctor, I believe he is admirable."

Clemence made a little ludicrous, but at the same time, perfectly charming, grimace.

"I am not a coward, Athelstane. I don't think I am going to die yet. But give me the brandy you spoke of, I certainly do feel faint, and the train will start in two seconds. You will inevitably be killed if you linger any longer on the step. Get in, do."

Athelstane obeyed. The young married couple had a first-class compartment to themselves. Athelstane poured out a little brandy in a small silver cup and handed it to his young wife. She drank it with avidity, and then the train started. Mrs. Athelstane Rodney then at once composed herself to sleep.

"Don't talk to me," she said to Athelstane; "only sleep will remove this faintness and strange pain in my head."

Thus Athelstane found himself sent to Coventry by his new wife on the first day of his marriage. He resolved to console himself as best he might. He put on his velvet cap, leaned back, folded his arms, and then said, softly:

"If I open the window on this side may I smoke?"

She opened her bright brown eyes.

"You know I like smoking, Athelstane. That first night when I was introduced to you you saw me smoke in Sir Robert's waggonette. Ah, you were in love with me then." And she sighed, then added with a laugh: "Anybody would think I had grown old and ugly since then to see the way in which you have changed, but I know I am quite as good-looking as I was then, and it is not six months ago."

Athelstane hastened to protest that he loved her still; he tried to put force and fire into his words; more than that, he tried to feel what he said, to call up again the love he had once felt for the exquisite Clemence, but all was useless. She told him plainly that she "wanted no empty words."

"Leave me alone, my good husband," said the bride. "Smoke and be content. Leave me in peace. You may mean well, but somehow the chain is broken. Please let me sleep!"

Somehow her manner completely chilled Athelstane. He did begin to smoke, and his wife lay back sleeping. Was she sleeping? He had an uncomfortable conviction that Mrs. Athelstane was watching him out of the corners of her but only half-closed eyes.

On sped the train through the smiling May countryside; all the woods were dressed in brightest green; the corn was like emerald velvet carpets on the uplands; meadows were gold-embroidered by the kingcups; down in the hollows lurked the cowslip, and the blue-eyed campanula peeped at them from the banks under the fir trees.

Far against the horizon swelled the purple hills. On sped the train through the peaceful landscape, through orchards abloom with white and rosy blossoms, skirting red-roofed villages with thatched barns and picturesque farm homesteads, all watched over by the Norman tower of some ancient ivy-grown church, while in the rear stood perhaps a grey old rectory. On sped the train. It was the season of long days, and the light did not fade in the sky.

Athelstane flung his cigar end away and began to think of the woman whom his soul would fain have owned as empress had such a thing been lawful. All at once he felt his collar grasped by a strong and savage hand. He had been looking out of the window, and his back was turned to Clemence, but he was a very strong young man, and thus he contrived to turn and lay hold of his assailant.

Great heaven, it was Clemence, his own wife! but he would never have recognised that face for hers had he seen it elsewhere. It was the face of a fiend, purple, swelled with a fiendish rage, the eyes starting out of the head, the mouth grinned—yes, grinned at him as a wolf might grin at its prey before it sprang upon it. In her hand was a razor, sharp, as he could divine.

"His throat, his throat!" she hissed. "Let me put it across once, twice—ha! and it is so sharp—so sharp, his head will fall on the floor! I hate you, I hate you, I hate you! I only married you that I might kill you! Ah! would you take it from me! See, I will cut your hand to pieces!"

And then during the deadly and desperate struggle that ensued, poor Athelstane heard his bride utter low curses, and that hideous language of the degraded and drunken in the lowest streets which makes sensitive and refined natures shrink and suffer as from physical pain. In a moment, too, he had recognised the voice. Good heavens! it was the same, and the vile wicked words were the same that had been hissed at him from the corridor on the first night of his arrival at home at Wolvermoor, in company of the Melrose family and of Doctor Finucan.

What mystery had shrouded that occurrence, so that he had often since doubted his senses, and

fancied that he must have had a strange species of nightmare, induced by over excitement, fatigue and cold.

"Die, die, die!" hissed the fury.

Athelstane struck the arm of the woman a furious blow which almost broke it. It was the only way to save his life. The razor, which had already cut his left hand fearfully, was now on the floor. He picked it up, threw it out of the window, and then turned to grapple a second time with his deadly foe. He saw, indeed, that nothing less than his life would satisfy this fiend.

"His throat, his throat!" she hissed. "Let me strangle him. If only he is dead I shall have peace."

At that moment the train, the speed of which had been slackening for some moments, stopped at a quiet country station, and Athelstane shouted "Help!" and "Murder!" at the utmost pitch of his voice. Help was soon forthcoming. Two stout porters came quickly into the carriage, and by their aid the maniac was at length secured, bound, and carried, still cursing and shrieking, into the station.

Athelstane, pale as death from loss of blood, called to his valet, who was in the train, to bind up his bleeding hand. At the same time the maid of Clemence, a tall, dark, masculine-looking woman, named Primrose, came running to the spot. When she saw Clemence she clasped her hands, and said with a grim smile to Athelstane:

"Now, you, sir, will shut her up in an asylum, I hope. She has done enough mischief, surely, by now."

"Is she an escaped lunatic?" asked a gentleman in the little assembled crowd.

"No, sir; she never has been in an asylum," said Primrose. "That's where she ought to have been put years ago when first she went mad, after they took her baby from her and told her her husband was dead in prison. Oh! the truth will have to come out now. There's no use hiding it any longer. 'Twas she struck your brother, Mr. Horace, Mr. Rodney. 'Twas she killed that poor gentle thing, the companion of Lady Melrose, at Doctor Thorn's party. Yes, yes, it will all have to come out now. It has been a secret wrong—the family trying to hide that she was mad, and allowing a raging lunatic like her to go about as if she were a sane person. 'My lord and my lady will have to stand their trial for conspiracy, and I hope 'twill cost them all they've got. I've long said it would come to this; not that I thought she would ever have ever turned upon you, Mr. Athelstane."

At that moment another down train came into the station. The other one which had brought Mr. Athelstane Rodney, his wife, servants, and luggage to Radgewick Station had now gone on, the servants having had the luggage brought out on the platform.

When this second train stopped everybody was too much engrossed in watching the writhing, screaming Clemence, held down as she was, poor wretch, with much difficulty by two strong men, and also in listening to the hysterical, but still most truthful, account of Primrose, the maid, to take any notice of the passengers who stepped out on the platform, and it was with a thrill of mingled horror and relief that Athelstane recognised Doctor Finucan, the tall, inscrutable, one-eyed man, whose fortunes had of late years seemed so strangely mixed up with those of the Melrose family. He strode straight up to Clemence and called to her, much as an angry man calls to a disobedient dog:

"Be silent, you vile maniac," he said, "or you shall go under the pump for an hour, and the cold water will knock all the madness out of you."

His words, his voice, the fiery gleams of his one eye acted like magic on the raving, raging Clemence. She stopped short in her struggles, then began to laugh a hideous wild laugh, then burst into tears and sobbed violently.

"Forgive me! forgive me!" said the wretched creature. "I will never, never do so again."

But Doctor Finucan smiled a grim smile.

"You will have no more chances of commit-

ting murders in your mad fits. Young woman," he said, sternly, "the game is up. I have brought two other medical men with me, to whom I have explained everything, and they will see that a proper certificate of lunacy is made out before the day is over. I knew what would happen if they let you marry anybody but me, but your mother was headstrong. She had a theory that marriage would set you right. Some fool of a doctor told her so. I followed you by the next train with these two doctors, my friends, and at every station where your train had stopped I made inquiry as to whether some catastrophe had not happened, and here I have learnt the worst. I wonder, my gay bridegroom, she did not assist you, or rather compel you to shuffle off this mortal coil," said the cynical doctor to Athelstane.

"And you," said Athelstane, whose eyes were blazing with wrath—"you knew that I was marrying a maniac—the murderer, so Primrose says, of the lady companion, and of my poor brother, and you did nothing to prevent the hideous wedding."

The doctor shrugged his broad shoulders.

"I am willing to answer," he said, "in a court of law for all I have done. I acted on scientific principles. The girl would have been cured in time if they had left her in my charge and allowed me to marry her, but they scorned the idea, and now the disgrace which their pride dreaded will fall upon them tenfold. I believe they had better get out of the country as quickly as they can—both my lord and my lady—or they will be prosecuted according to law!"

Doctor Finucan loved Clemence, monomaniac though she was, with an all devouring love, and when he believed that he had lost her for ever, he sacrificed her and her parents to his disappointed fury, and acknowledged his own participation in a secret wrong. That evening poor Clemence entered a large private asylum for the insane.

But little remains to be told of this strange tale of a young girl who went raving mad with a method in her madness in consequence of her mother's severity, on account of her mad marriage with her dancing-master.

Lord Melrose had really been in complete ignorance of his daughter's rash marriage up to the time when all the facts of this most extraordinary case were made public, and then his handsome head was bowed in shame, and he left the country with his wife and daughter. The old Earl of Hartbury, who met Leontine, Lady Lingham, at some evening party in the West End, recognised her as the beautiful girl with whom he had travelled, and who had spoken so plainly to him, and to whom he had taken such a fancy.

He was at the time frightfully angry with his son, Lord Melrose, for the part he had taken in concealing his daughter's madness, and in satisfying himself with placing her under the care of a doctor who studied brain diseases in his own family, instead of putting her out of harm's way in a lunatic asylum.

So angry was he that he at once repudiated Lord Melrose as his legitimate son, and brought forth the certificate of his marriage with the grandmother of Leontine. A few legal forms were gone through, and poor William Melrose, late of St. Charles Street, Baywater, was at once acknowledged as Lord Melrose, heir to the earldom and Melrose Castle. The seat in Worcester was given up to him and his children.

Poor Caesar was thus next heir but one to an English earldom. Margaret Bainston and her lover Richard Brown were set at liberty, and a large subscription was set on foot for them, so that poor Margaret became quite rich, and in time married Richard, who was a good stepfather to her child; and her father was given a snug farm on the Hazlemere Estate.

Horace slowly recovered his faculties and his strength under the skilful treatment of Sir Fulk, but he was never again so gay, so strong, or so clever as he had been. His uncle settled

a good fortune on him, and in a couple of years time he married a fair and gentle bride of good lineage and fortune.

All the servants who had been in the plot, and who had helped to hide the dreadful fact of the madness of Clemence, came forward with one accord at the prosecuting trial which Sir Robert Rodney brought against Lord Melrose and told the truth.

Clemence had really become mad when the fury of her proud mother was poured out upon her at that time when she had found her lying ill with her child by her side at the farmhouse, and had told her that her marriage must be concealed for ever, and her child taken from her.

Her child was taken from her; the milk flew to her head; she became a raging lunatic; the skill of Doctor Finucan seemed to effect a cure, but Clemence was subject to sudden fits of madness, when she flew on the persons next her and strove to take their lives.

If only Doctor Finucan happened to be near her, his voice, his eye, his tone of command had the power to bring her back to her senses, though she never knew what fearful deeds she had committed in her mad moments. She it was who had rushed howling about the park at Wolvermoor on the night when Athelstane had gone out to search for the person who was making the disturbance; she it was whom he had heard talking to herself by the pond on that wintry night, and he had mistaken her for Margaret Bainston.

Doctor Finucan admitted afterwards to Athelstane that, fearing he would recognise Clemence, he had made him inhale a drug which caused insensibility for a time. The doctor had afterwards treated him so skilfully that he had suffered no ill-effects from the drug.

And Sir Robert made Athelstane his acknowledged heir before all the world. But was he bound for life to the unhappy lunatic, Clemence? Not so. Dupuis was her husband. He had not died in prison; he was the man to whom Eva gave money in the Seven Dials, and sent afterwards to a charitable institution.

There the poor man fell ill of brain fever, so that Eva could not bring him forward in time to prevent her cousin's marriage with Clemence, but on his recovery he did come forward with proofs of his identity and of his marriage, with Clemence which satisfied a law court, and Athelstane's wretched marriage was pronounced null and void.

Athelstane settled a comfortable life pension on the unfortunate man, who persisted in saying that he had been wrongfully imprisoned, but that he was not able to prove it. We will end our story with a copy of the announcements of two marriages as they appeared in the "Court Circular" and other fashionable papers:

"On Wednesday, the seventeenth, at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, by the Rector, assisted by the Rev. Solomon Dukes, Athelstane Rodney, Esquire, son of the late Athelstane Rodney, of Wolvermoor, county York, and nephew of Sir Robert Rodney, Baronet, to Leontine, eldest daughter of Lord William Melrose, and widow of the late Sir Peter Lingham, Baronet. On Thursday, at St. George's, Hanover Square, Eva, eldest daughter of Sir Robert Rodney, Baronet, to Arthur, eldest son of Lord Elwin. No cards."

[THE END.]

#### A SLIGHT MISTAKE.

It was not until some months later that Mr. M'Ginnis, in a diffusive moment, explained the cause of the appearance of himself and wife which had so puzzled and astonished his neighbours. Green Island, like most other parts of Wisconsin, is plagued with mosquitoes of a large and peculiarly vindictive kind. On the night in question the mosquito net at M'Ginnis's got out of order, and the mosquitoes swarmed in in troops. Mr. M'Ginnis, maddened by their attacks, got up, and going to the shelf upon which stood a bottle of spirits of camphor,

rubbed her face and arms with the fluid, and then performed the office for her husband, who lay snugly asleep.

In the morning, upon waking, she was horrified to find a black man lying by the side of her. Jumping up, she seized a club, and attacked him. M'Ginnis, on waking, was equally astonished at finding himself assaulted by an athletic negro woman, armed with a club, and a furious fight ensued. Mrs. M'Ginnis was a powerful woman, and it was not until both combatants were exhausted and terribly wounded that a pause ensued, and the combatants recognised each other. An investigation was then made, and it appeared that Mrs. M'Ginnis had mistaken, in the dark, an ink bottle for that which contained the spirits of camphor. Hence the metamorphosis and its terrible results.

## THE FORCED MARRIAGE; —OR— JEW AND GENTILE.

### CHAPTER XV.

THE Jewess did not heed the malicious tone in which Upton's words were uttered. She only said in reply:

"I was wakeful last night. Without being absolutely ill I was restless and uneasy, and poor Pluto also seemed to share my disquietude. I fancied I heard footsteps going and coming from the house; but at last, toward morning, I must have fallen asleep; yet it could only have been for a few moments, for all of a sudden I found myself standing upright in the middle of my bedroom floor, my heart beating so as almost to stop my breath, and a terrible scream ringing in my ears. Something had aroused Pluto, too, for he stood alert and excited, with his ears pricked forward, and the hair along his spine all bristled with alarm. But a few moments later, after listening most eagerly and hearing nothing, I made up my mind I had been frightened by a dream, and that I in turn had frightened my dog by springing up so suddenly. So I lay down again, but I couldn't sleep; and presently Pluto began to sniff and whine. He went to the window and tried to get out, and then he came to me begging for something I could not understand what; but a few moments later I, too, began to sniff the air. I smelled smoke. I again sprang up. I ran to the window and looked out. I saw a red reflection against the sky. I heard, too, when I reached the window, a crackling sound which I could not mistake; so, without stopping for anything but a blanket, which I snatched from the bed, I rushed forth toward Mr. Aveling's rooms; for, sir, I did first think of the helpless man who lay bound to his bed by weakness. I thought of him—unconscious of danger—and of others sleeping, perhaps, in his room, worn out by watching, all unmindful of the danger which threatened the whole family with destruction. I ran as fast as I could to the front of the house; there I saw the hall door standing wide open, and through the hall, up the staircase, and through the passages beyond, I heard the wind and the flames roaring—oh! so wildly! I heard nothing else—no voices, no footsteps—so I knew I was the only one astray. There was but one thing to be done; so I ran upstairs as fast as I could. The smoke and fire were ahead of me, but I wrapped the blanket around my head and dashed through them. I seemed an age reaching Mr. Aveling's room, and when I got there it was too late!"

The girl broke down for a moment, as filled with the horrible reminiscence she turned away her head and struggled for self-control.

"It was too late," she continued, turning her face again towards her auditors. "All the rooms, the bedroom especially, were ablaze; the flames drove me back. I fell; my hands clutched fire as I reached them out to save my-



self. I don't know how I got out of the horrible element. I was almost wild with pain and terror, but I knew there was something else I could do, if I had failed in saving my—my husband."

The word fell hesitatingly from her lips, for never before had she voluntarily spoken it.

"I ran to those parts of the house which the fire had not reached. I dashed into every room, not knowing which were occupied and which were not, but in every one I raised as loud an alarm as I could. In some I saw people fast asleep, for the fire, so close behind me, made everything clear, and these I stopped to fully arouse, lest they might not be aware of their danger. At last, when I had done everything I could do, I came back here, but I had barely time. I think I must have fainted, for I knew nothing again until I saw this kind Mrs. Markham bending over me."

The pulses of the sympathetic housekeeper thrilled as she listened to this simple yet most exciting narration; but the nerves of the phlegmatic, calculating Upton were not so generously affected.

Though he saw before him the woman who had rescued him from a most terrible death,—though he beheld her now suffering as it were in his stead—for had she followed the dictates of self-preservation, she would herself have escaped unscathed—though he looked upon a heroine than whom the world had scarcely produced a greater—yet Mark Upton's heart did not throb with a single beat of gratitude, of pity, or of admiration.

The black, slimy depths of his nature had indeed been stirred, but only by a darker gleam of satisfaction that the girl had not been successful in her efforts to reach Edward Aveling's chamber in time to save him from his fate.

Exhausted by the painful effort she had made, Rachael again closed her eyes, and so deadly a pallor overspread her face that this time Upton, undeterred by the housekeeper, hurried from the room to despatch a messenger for a physician, actuated thereto not by gratitude and pity, but by a selfish interest, which the death of the master of Ashurst made more feasible and alluring.

The fleetest horse was therefore taken from the stables, and Dr. Armstrong was once more commanded to hasten with all speed to Ashurst, for another tragedy, more terrible than the first, demanded his immediate presence.

What death can be imagined more horrible than that by fire? The martyrs of old, those who subscribed to their faith by their sufferings at the stake, must have groaned in spirit, though preserving a brave exterior, when their fate was announced; for undoubtedly within many a breast there lurked, if not a hope, at least the wish, that some less horrible condemnation might be theirs.

Think of the pain, the anguish, which a burn or a scald, covering simply a square inch of flesh, can produce, and then fancy, if one can, the unspeakable agony of the whole body quivering in the fierce caresses of flames which know no pity, which are never permitted to abate, until the human form, the tenement of the noble soul, falls a blackened, sickening heap among the faggots, where, only a short time before, it stood erect in God's own image.

Horrible as such martyrdom seems, there are other deaths by fire still more dreadful. Fancy, for instance, that instead of being bound fast to a stake, by massive chains, whose very weight burdens the limbs and makes it a difficult matter for the sufferer to raise his hands in a last supplication to the God for whose sake he is brought to this dire extremity—fancy, I say, a person fettered to his bed by sickness, held fast by the inexorable chains of weakness.

Fancy him alone, without companionship, with no friends to cheer him in his martyrdom by sympathetic glances, no foes to convert to his own faith by his steadfastness. Fancy, too, that

instead of the bright sun shining down upon the dreadful scene, night, solemn, still and dark, reigns supreme, and fancy that instead of the martyr's assurance of speedy immortality, the helpless captive is writhing in remorseful agony.

Think of his first becoming conscious of the danger which threatens him; think of the frantic efforts which such a one would make, first to call for aid, then to escape; think of his agony when his cries were unheeded, when essaying to rise and fly from the place, he is flung back by inexorable weakness; think of his frenzy as every moment the all-devouring element comes nearer and nearer, as it glides along the floor like a serpent hurrying to reach its prey, as it runs along ceiling, as it seizes and hurls into charred destruction priceless pictures, treasured mementoes, sacred relics, and, at last, seizing upon the very bed whereon the sufferer lies bound, now speechless, perhaps, with horror, how the cruel flames seem to dance higher in delight that a more precious victim had been gained.

How fierce and how short the struggle which ensues, for the foe is strong and the victim weak! Alas! that such horrors ever occur. Alas! that an element so beneficial is ever permitted to turn and rend mankind like the evil spirits in Holy Writ!

Such were the thoughts which ran shudderingly through the mind of Rachael Aveling, as she, bound to her sick bed by suffering, pondered day after day upon the hard providence which had befallen Ashurst. Now she thought she could disentangle all the confused memories of that dreadful night. She knew what it was which had aroused her from her light slumbers with such a sudden thrill of dismay.

It could have been nothing else than her husband's frantic cry for help, when he saw the flames leaping towards him. Alone, deserted by those who should have watched beside him, weakened by illness, unable, perhaps, through partial unconsciousness, to avail himself of the few chances which might have been at hand, who knows, who could ever know how dreadful that agony might have been.

The suffering girl experienced a share of the agony in her own person, for the burns from which she suffered were most severe, yet in spirit she endured more, for she could not free her mind from the horrible reflections which haunted it.

The poor thing, in her distress, blamed herself for having fallen asleep after her long, wakeful night. If she had remained awake that cry would have been sooner comprehended, and after clearly hearing it she would not have fallen back upon her bed and left her helpless invalid husband to his fate.

She knew—ah! she remembered with infinite bitterness that the doomed man had made an effort to escape, for when she ran that terrible gauntlet with death, when for the briefest space of time she lifted the protecting blanket from her head and looked into that sick chamber, what did she see?

Oh! it was horrible to remember; she would drive it from her memory if she were able; but in that chamber, where the flames raged and roared in wildest fury, she caught a glimpse of the whole interior just before everything fell into ruin. She saw that the bed was empty. The horrible spectacle she expected to see there was spared her, but upon the floor, between the door and the bed, was something about which the flames were dancing and sporting with fiendish activity.

It bore no resemblance to a human form—as why indeed should it, lying there in the midst of those fiery orgies—but the sickened girl knew intuitively what it was—what it had been—and with a chill of horror, even in that blasting atmosphere, she again shrouded her face and fled onward.

It was almost in vain that Doctor Armstrong, when he came to prescribe for the suffering girl, cautioned her against brooding over the terrible experience which he knew she had undergone. How could she drive it from her

mind when the horrible event was in everyone's thoughts and upon everyone's tongue?

Since the fire the household at Ashurst was necessarily diminished, the limited accommodations making such a change imperative. The morning-room, the library, the suite occupied by Rachael, with the chambers and attics above them, were the only apartments left uninjured, and in these that portion of the family which Mark Upton found it expedient to retain were quite comfortably lodged.

The library was occupied by Upton as parlour, office and study; the morning-room became the dining-room; a suitable kitchen was improvised from a portion of the main building not too greatly damaged for that purpose; the upper servants occupied the chambers, and in the attics others found comfortable quarters.

At Rachael's earnest request, as well as by Doctor Armstrong's command, the housekeeper took up her abode in the apartments of the young girl, spending the hours not employed in supervising the household in attendance upon the invalid, and spending the night upon a comfortable cot beside the little sitting-room fire.

The good woman proved herself a most devoted nurse, never leaving her patient for many moments at a time, no matter how pressing her other duties might be, and her kindly companionship was so grateful to the lonely girl that soon there sprang up between them a friendship which, in truth, did much toward furthering the invalid's recovery; for had her mind been left to brood upon the harrowing remembrances we have enumerated, her illness might reasonably have had a fatal termination.

But Mrs. Markham understood that the mind, as well as the body, often needs careful nursing, and so, with admirable tact in one so uncultured, she brought into the sick room many fresh and cheery topics from the outer world.

It is true, the invalid sometimes grew weary of the good woman's prolixity, but such fatigue was far less harmful than solitary retrospection, and on no account would Rachael have dispensed with the companionship of her new friend.

"I declare, Mrs. Aveling," the housekeeper said one night, when the labours of the day being over, the various store-rooms safely locked, and the basket of silver brought in that it might be under her own guardianship during the night—"I declare, I think it's quite a pity you and I didn't find each other out before."

The good woman, among her many virtues, reckoned one conspicuous fault. She was fond of magnifying her own importance, and so at times reached a point of familiarity not usually allowed in one in her position. But Rachael's own situation was such an anomalous one that she felt she could not assert any superiority over the other members of that household.

So she turned her head with a welcoming smile as Mrs. Markham drew forth her knitting and took her accustomed seat at the bedside.

"I think I have given you a great deal of trouble," she replied. "I'm sure I can never repay you for all you have done for me."

"Tut! now, dearie, you mustn't ever think of paying me for the little I have done. Indeed, where should I be now if it hadn't been for your own blessed thought of me when I lay sleeping so sound, never suspecting how the fire threatened me with death?"

"Ah! the fire!" sighed Rachael, sadly. "How long ago that seems."

"And well it may seem long to you, ma'am," returned Mrs. Markham, who was alternately respectful and familiar. "Just think what you have gone through since then. Your terrible burns weakened you so you had no more strength than a month-old baby; then you had a smart touch of fever; and now you're weak again, but, thank Heaven! not so weak as you were the morning I found you lying here on the floor more dead than alive. Indeed, ma'am, I think

all this is a great deal to happen in three or four weeks."

"Is it really as long as that, that I have been lying here so helpless and worthless?"

"Four whole weeks, ma'am; and you've borne 'em like one of the blessed martyrs. But, la! if you think a great deal has happened in here, you'd be surprised to see what's going on outside."

"You must tell me, Mrs. Markham. I so long for the time to come when I can go out again and take my long walks."

"It'll be a long time yet before you can walk very far from Ashurst, dearie. You'll have to find something to do nearer home, for those poor feet of yours will be tender for many a day."

Rachael sighed and looked down upon her feet still swathed in linen bandages, and upon her hands but just released from their bonds. Mrs. Markham, noticing the disappointed look which settled upon the young face, continued, cheerily:

"It makes me wonder when I see Mr. Mark's goings on!"

Rachael looked up, for it suddenly crossed her mind that it might be well for her if she informed herself somewhat concerning Upton's movements. So she asked:

"What is he doing, pray?"

"Oh, what isn't he doing, my dear? Certainly if I had lost a near relation just as Mr. Mark has, I'd be a little more decent and in less of a hurry to fit his shoes to my own feet."

"What?" cried the young lady, in astonishment, for she took the housekeeper's words literally. "Is Mr. Upton so sordid that he even refits—"

"Oh, law, dearie!" Mrs. Markham interrupted, with a light laugh. "You mustn't take in earnest everything an old woman like me says. Of course, Mr. Mark don't bother himself with Mr. Ed'ard's old shoes, or anything of that sort. I only meant, my dear, that it would be more becoming in him if he wasn't in such a hurry to get fast hold of all poor dear Mr. Ed'ard's property."

"There are lawyers coming and going by the score, it seems to me, and there are some poor relations, too, I fancy, that Mr. Mark doesn't like any too well to see, for you remember, my dear, if you'll excuse me for speaking of such matters, you know Mr. Ed'ard was an only child, and there was nobody but him to come into possession of old Mr. Aveling's money, and there was a deal of it, too, if all I hear is true."

"And so, when Mr. Ed'ard dies, Mr. Mark is next o' kin, and I reckon he's having his rights fixed so tight that nobody shall ever interfere with 'em. So, as I said before, he has lawyers coming and going, and he's dodging back and forth from town, and there are masons, and carpenters, and builders, and what not hovering around the house, until, sometimes, I almost think that Ashurst's been turned into a public square."

"Why are the builders and carpenters here?" asked Rachael, half indifferently.

"Dear bless you you! to build the house up again, I suppose. Mr. Mark couldn't let the bricks get cold before he began to tear 'em away and clear the ground for rebuilding, and I expect he'll have a bigger place than the old one, if all them rolls of paper in black leather covers is plans that I see some men bringing in under their arms. And the other day, when I sat in one corner of the library making out my accounts I heard 'em talking about billiard-rooms, and drawing-rooms, and reception-rooms, and conservatories until my very bones ached thinking what a trouble it would be to keep 'em all in order. Upon my word it does seem as if Mr. Mark's head had got turned since he came into possession."

"Mrs. Markham," said Rachael after a long pause, during which she lay looking thoughtfully into the fire.

"Well, my dear," the housekeeper returned, bending nearer the light to take up a stitch which she had dropped in her knitting.

"Shall you remain at Ashurst?"

"Well, my dear, I suppose I shall, unless Mr. Mark thinks he must have a housekeeper for his new house. Why do you ask?"

"Because," Rachael answered, slowly, "because I was thinking that as soon as I am able to walk I must leave Ashurst."

"You leave Ashurst?" exclaimed the woman, in surprise. "Why should you leave Ashurst? Don't you like it here?"

"Not very well," was the simple reply. "Indeed, I was never very fond of the place, and I think I would prefer going elsewhere."

"Where, may I ask, my dear?"

"That is a question I cannot easily answer, I—I thought if you were leaving we might go together, perhaps."

"Well, ma'am, I must say, if you go to a house of your own, and think I would suit, I shouldn't greatly mind leaving Ashurst, for I've no great faith that Mr. Mark and I shall agree any too well."

"Oh! Mrs. Markham, you mistake my meaning. I don't intend to have a home of my own, I never expect to have one. But since I've been lying here I have thought of a great many things; more than all else I have been thinking of what I should do when I get well. I am determined to leave Ashurst as soon as possible, but I think I shall need a little help when I go, and I thought if you'd let me stay with you somewhere until I could get something to do for myself it would be a kindness I would never forget."

Mrs. Markham's knitting dropped; with the hands which held it into her lap, and then looking first through and then over the top of her round-eyed spectacles, she exclaimed:

"Why, bless your life, Mrs. Aveling, what can you be thinking about? Why are you talking about going out to find something to do, when you'll have enough and more than enough to live on all the days of your life!"

"Evidently, Mrs. Markham, we do not understand each other," returned Rachael, with a smile. "You must not suppose that I am what at all people call 'well off.' I have nothing, I own nothing except the clothing I wear; even the bed I lie on belongs to Mr. Upton, and from him I cannot expect favours any longer than I am obliged to do so."

"Now, what a very innocent young person you are!" ejaculated the housekeeper, surveying her mistress with a species of wonder. "Don't you know, ma'am, you have rights, dower rights I think they call 'em, that Mr. Mark and all the lawyers in the land can't cheat you out of? If you were a mind to do it you could turn him out of Ashurst, I suppose; but he can't never turn you out."

Rachael looked at her companion for some seconds in silence, for the latter was enunciating a doctrine altogether new to the inexperienced young girl.

"A widder has rights as much as a wife," continued the housekeeper, with as much decision as though she was delivering a "strong-minded" lecture, "just as many rights as a wife, ma'am," she repeated; "and, ma'am, you are not the woman I take you for if you don't assert them. Now I'm a widder, and I remember very well when Ephraim died how his brothers thought they'd more right to his property than I had. They wanted it all—to be sure there wa'n't much of it, and I thought there was too little to divide, so I just went to a smartish sort of a lawyer, and I got it all, but la! my dear, I don't know as it was worth while, for, after his debts were all paid, and the lawyer too, there was only enough left to buy this breast-pin with Ephraim's hair set in the back on't. But with you, ma'am, it is worth while, and if I was you I'd never stand by and let Mark Upton take everything. You've got law enough on your side to help you keep all you need want."

But to the good woman's surprise, and partly, it must be confessed, to her disgust, the young widow declared her intention of putting forward no claims whatever.

"You do not understand exactly how I am situated, my good friend," she said, smiling amiably

yet sadly upon her companion. "My life in Ashurst has not been a happy one. It is true I have had some quiet, contented moments, but not so many as to make me wish either to remain here or to take anything away with me. I know that I need not lead a useless life; there are many things I might do if I only had a little help in starting. When do you think I shall be able to use my feet at all, Mrs. Markham," the girl suddenly asked, half-raising herself upon her elbow, as if already impatient to be away.

"Upon my word, ma'am, you surprise me so I do not know what to think or say. Of course, my dear, you are your own mistress and will do just as you think best; but let an old woman, who's seen considerable of this world, tell you that if you haven't got many friends, you can't do better than to keep all the money you can rightfully lay your hands on. Somehow, my dear, there's a power of might in money; it makes people more respectful, it makes one more clever-like, and it seems to discourage one's enemies, if one has any. It's a good thing to have if you're sick or well, and then, my dear, think how much pleasure there is in using it to help others. Friends, my dear, are the good God's best gift, but if you happen to have none of them, don't despise money!"

Rachael again smiled into the earnest, kindly face that with such solemnity emphasised this homily, yet there were tears glistening in her large dark eyes as she replied:

"Dear Mrs. Markham, I am a Jewess, and therefore, if there is any truth in the common verdict of mankind, I should know the value of money. I know the misery it averts, how much comfort it procures, how many blessings it confers. I have known poverty's sharpest pangs. I have been stung by contumely. I have been unjustly dealt by. I have been deceived, abandoned, imprisoned. Though I have bitterly felt the need of money, I have as bitterly regretted that it was ever coined; for because of it I have been widowed and betrayed. Therefore sooner than touch one farthing not mine by right of honest winning, I would starve by the road side. Hitherto I have remained here because the solemn vow I made at the altar demanded my remaining as a duty, but now that death has cancelled that obligation, I shall go away. Pluto, perhaps, will go with me," she added, turning her face toward the dog, which lying peacefully at her bed side, had risen on his haunches as he heard his mistress raise her voice in earnest talk, and as she leaned toward him, affectionately lapped her eyelids in tender response.

"Yes," the girl continued, attempting to pat the shaggy head with her poor maimed hand, "Pluto and I will go off and seek our fortunes, won't we, my faithful friend?" and she smiled into the kind eyes beside her, as into those of a tried human friend.

"Oh, but indeed, my dear," Mrs. Markham said, "Mr. Mark would never be such a villain as to let you go away, after all you have done for him and the rest of us. Just think of that, ma'am, and never again think of going off to seek your fortune."

"I only did my duty, Mrs. Markham," Rachael gravely replied. "I shall not abandon the idea of quitting Ashurst, for I should be happier elsewhere; so do you, my good friend, try and think of some place where I can go and make myself useful. By the way, what is that large building over toward the east of Ashurst I have often noticed it in my walks?"

"The large, red brick house set far back in the grounds."

"Yes; that's the place."

"Oh, la, my dear, that's only a hospital. The gentleman who built it took a notion that sick people get well faster in the country than in the city, so he built and fitted that house up in fine style, and people do say that it's a very nice place to go to."

A hospital! The woman's words remained in Rachael's memory long after the housekeeper ceased speaking. Indeed, far into the night



the girl lay thinking and pondering, and for many days thereafter her thoughts turned with strange persistence toward that plain, red brick building set far back from the highway.

(To be Continued.)

## PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

### CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.

**ALHAMBRA.**—Rothomago.  
**ALEXANDRA PALACE.**—Little Jack Horner.  
**AGRICULTURAL HALL,** Islington.—Bos-tock and Wombwell's Menagerie.  
**COVENT GARDEN.**—Sindbad the Sailor.  
**CONNAUGHT.**—London Pride.  
**CRITERION.**—Betsey.  
**COURT.**—The Old Love and the New.  
**CRYSTAL PALACE.**—Jack the Giant Killer.  
**DUKE'S.**—New Babylon. Nothing to Nurse.  
**GAITY.**—Gulliver.  
**GLOBE.**—Les Cloches de Corneville. The Happy Man.  
**HENGLER'S GRAND CIRQUE.**—Eques-trian entertainment.  
**IMPERIAL.**—Red Riding Hood and Little Boy Blue.  
**LYCEUM.**—Merchant of Venice.  
**MARYLEBONE.**—Cinderella.  
**NEW SADDLER'S WELLS.**—The Forty Thieves.  
**NEW ELEPHANT AND CASTLE.**—Babies in the Wood.  
**OLYMPIC.**—Such a Good Man.  
**OPERA COMIQUE.**—H.M.S. Pinafore.  
**PAVILION.**—Children in the Wood.  
**PARK.**—Beauty and the Beast.  
**PRINCESS'S.**—Drink.  
**PRINCE OF WALES'S.**—Ours.  
**ROYALTY.**—Crutch and Toothpick.  
**ST. JAMES'S.**—The Falcon.  
**STANDARD.**—Bluebeard.  
**STRAND.**—Madame Favart.  
**SURREY.**—Aladdin.  
**SANGER'S GRAND NATIONAL AMPHI-  
 THEATRE.**—Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp.  
**THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.**—  
 Bluebeard. Morning Performances every Mon-  
 day, Wednesday, and Saturday at Two.  
**VAUDEVILLE.**—Castles in the Air. The  
 Road to Ruin.  
**VICTORIA.**—Bluff King Hal.

### WELBECK ABBEY.

The grounds round Welbeck Abbey, the seat of the late Duke of Portland, appear to be literally undermined. Extending in all direc-tions from the abbey are burrows and passages, not mere borings or excavations, but lofty, spa-cious passages, brilliantly lighted by costly apparatus for letting in sunlight, and, where sunlight cannot be admitted, by lights from gas. By an underground passage we come to the celebrated riding school, the like of which is not to be found in Europe, or in the world. It is entered by a trap-door, opened by means of a curiously designed cranked in the passage.

In the days of the Duke of Newcastle it was used as a riding-school: now it is a magnificent museum of art over 180 feet in length. Hundreds of pictures are arranged—not hung—round the gallery, and piled in stacks on the floor are thousands of volumes of books, some modern, and many old, rare, and valuable. The floor of this gallery is of oak, and the ceiling is made to represent a brilliant midsummer sky.

Mirrors in profusion are placed about, and light is shed from four chandeliers suspended from the roof, and each weighing a ton. This apart-ment is lighted up by over 2,000 gas lights, and when all are illuminated the effect must be ex-tremely brilliant.

There are some miles of passages under the grounds. One extends from the abbey half the way to Worksop; another was used only by the Duke of Portland. The passages are all broad enough for three people to walk abreast in them and pleasant to walk in. The library, like the picture gallery, is underground, and is the work of many years. It is divided into five large rooms, and so arranged as to form, when desirable, one very large room. This library is 236 feet long. Another immense and superbly constructed room has been erected underground. At one end it is approached by a spiral staircase, and at the other by subterranean passages. Church or ballroom? It would do admirably for both. It was begun five years ago, and is left in an incomplete state. There are many of these rooms at Welbeck. They are free from draughts, admirably lighted, magnificently decorated, and all very costly.

Comparatively few out-buildings are to be seen. The most remarkable is the new riding-school, a building of gigantic proportions and of extraordinary beauty. The walls are of solid stone, and the roof of wood, iron, and glass. It is nearly 400 feet in length and 100 feet wide, and divided into a great centre and two aisles. The central department is decorated with a frieze of painted brasswork representing birds, beasts, and foliage, and of perfect workmanship and elegant design. It is 50 feet high, and lighted by 8,000 gas jets. Here the Duke took pleasure in seeing his horses exercised.

The "works" are marvels. He employed constantly upon them over 2,000 workmen. In fact, Welbeck was like an industrial village.

### A BASHFUL LOVER.

Most girls find a bashful lover very wearisome and irritating. He adds nothing to the attractions of society; he is invariably quiet when he should speak; and constantly makes mortifying blunders. Worse than all, he hasn't the courage to declare his love, though his heart is full of affection. His tongue is tied, and instead of really enjoying the society of her of whom he is enamoured, her presence renders him uneasy and unhappy, with the conscious-ness that he is not appearing to the best advan-tage, and the fear that he is losing his chances of winning the object of his desire by the wretched show he is making of himself. He retires from the interview depressed and mortified, and, much as he longs to see the loved one again, the remembrance of his previous bashfulness and awkwardness, which, perhaps, he exaggerates, will keep him from her side. What to do with such a fellow? It is not easy to manage him; but as bashfulness is only a form of self consciousness, a girl should try to make him forget himself, and, by the exercise of tact, draw from him the story he is anxious to tell.

### CHINESE WORDS OF WISDOM.

The prime minister of the kingdom of Sung consulted Mencius, and told him that being convinced of the oppressive character of a tax that bore heavily upon the people, he thought he should diminish it, and at the end of the year abolish it altogether. Mencius answered: "There was a man who was accustomed to steal every day the poultry of his neighbours and was reproached for his dishonesty. 'Well,' he answered, 'I will amend little by little. I will only steal one fowl a month for a year to come, and then I will abstain altogether.' No," said Mencius, "no; when you know that what you do is unjust, cease at once to do it. Why wait a year?"

Men talk idly about empire, nation, family. The foundation of the empire is in the nation, of the nation in the family, of the family in the individual; in fine, government is founded on the people, the people on the family, the family on its chief. Win the people, and the empire is won; win their affections and you win the people; you win their hearts by meeting their wishes, by providing for their wants, and by imposing upon them nothing they detest.

As the fish hurries away from the otter to the protection of deep waters—as the little bird flies to the thick forest from the hawk—so do sub-jects fly from wicked kings. You cannot reason with the passionate; you cannot act with the feeble or the capricious.

**PARLIAMENT** will meet for the despatch of business on the 5th of January.

A **FRENCH** paper points out how the passion for gambling is shown in England, so that even in wedding notices it is necessary to state that there were "no cards."

**MR. BARNUM** writes that his highest ambition professionally at present, is to pay the British Government £20,000 for the privilege of ex-hibiting alive for five years its "white elephant," King Cetewayo. Mr. B. is below zero cool.

The height of New York politeness is passing round upon the opposite side of the lady when walking with her in order not to step upon her shadow.

A **WELL-KNOWN** litterateur and humourist modestly says that his chief literary acquirements are the books he has borrowed and never returned.

A **PROPOSAL** has been made to relax the marriage laws which makes a marriage without special license illegal after midday. The pro-posal is to extend the hours from six a.m. to six p.m., and, in fact, to get rid of that most miser-able of entertainments, a chicken and cham-pagne repast at 1 p.m. We shall soon have matrimonial kettle-drums followed with "No cards."

In a discussion about the discovery of the north pole and the south pole, a man who had become disgusted with public tight-rope per-formances burst in with the exclamation, "When they do discover the long-sought poles, some lunatic will be slinging a rope from one of them to the other and trundling a wheelbarrow over it."

**THE TICHBORNE CASE.**—We understand that the Attorney-General has granted his fiat for a writ of error in the case of the Tichborne Claimant upon doubts whether the Court had the power to pass a sentence of penal servitude upon each separate count of the indictment, and whether the sentence ought not to have been one of seven years' penal servitude. This period has now expired, and if the point of law should be successful, the Claimant will be at once restored to liberty.

A **CLERGYMAN** said a clever thing the other day to amuse his congregation, namely, that there was still many a one who, whilst engaged in singing apparently with all his heart the lines—

"Were the whole realm of nature mine  
 That were an offering far too small,"

was diligently engaged, with one hand in his pocket, in scraping the edge of a threepenny piece to make sure it was not a fourpenny!

A **LECTURER**, by way of illustration, said that when a person "who had kept out late, tries to get into his house without waking the family, every stair, and door, and board creaks like a rusty hinged sign swinging in the wind, while a burglar can go through the same house as noiselessly as a zephyr," and added, "I know this is so from personal experience." "In which capacity?" cried out a member of the opposition—"as the sneaking husband, or the prowling burglar?" The speaker didn't get on very well after that.



[A LITTLE CONSPIRATOR.]

## HIS SECOND WIFE.

### CHAPTER IV.

It was reception eve at Mr. Langdon's elegant mansion, in one of the fashionable squares of our capital. The house was a blaze of light from gullet to basement, for Mrs. Langdon's receptions were thronged with beauty and wit. The lady sat in her room alone, gazing with triumphant eyes at her own reflection in the mirror, but evidently not thinking alone of her beauty or the elegance of her attire, for there was a peculiar, almost sardonic smile curving the thin red lips.

Presently she arose and swept from the room, her velvet robe trailing heavily on the rich carpet. Ascending the stairs she paused at the door on the second floor, and rapped gently. It was opened by a beautiful girl in whose wonderfully matured face we can hardly recognise our Amy. She was dressed in a loose wrapper, her golden hair trailing loosely on her shoulders and about the sweet face now stained with tears.

"Poor child—I am sorry for you, Amy," said her stepmother, laying her hand gently on hers. "But you must dress and go down, dear, and show Clark Easton that you are not dying because he deceived you."

"I cannot, oh, I cannot!" sobbed the girl.

"But you must, Amy; your father commands it—that you show the world you do not care for this fellow who would have deceived and then deserted you, if we had not discovered it in time."

"But you cannot prove this," cried the girl, defiantly.

"Will you do as your father wishes if I can?" said Mrs. Langdon, looking keenly into Amy's pale and agitated face.

"Yes," was the proud answer.

"Then I will put this letter in your hands. Your father and I have had it several days."

Amy took the letter, and when she had finished reading it dropped it from her rigid fingers to the floor. It was in Clark Easton's handwriting, addressed to a girl Amy knew, and running over with the love that she had believed only given to her. She set her dainty foot upon it while her face was as haughty as the woman's who watched her, and whose gloved hands softly applauded the action.

"I will send Annette to dress you," she said, and was gone, in her triumph forgetting the crushed note on the floor.

And while Annette dressed the golden hair, and placed the robes of silk and lace on the faultless form, sweet Amy's heart was full of bitter determination. When she had dismissed the maid, and was waiting for her stepmother, the door opened and Zoe came in, her eyes like stars, and her cheeks glowing with the brisk walk from her music master's.

"Oh, you are going into the parlour to-night, Amy. You promised to stay with me."

"I know I did, Zoe, dear," said Amy, as she kissed her fondly. "But it is papa's wish that I go."

"I don't believe it," said the child, impetuous as ever. "I don't believe he knows or cares anything about it. I know she says so, but how you can believe or listen to her is more than I know."

"Hush, Zoe! You mustn't talk so. Papa does not love me, and he does not think I love him."

"It's all her work," said Zoe, with a backward toss of her head that sent her brown curls flying. "She has been in here lately—I can tell by the very air."

Springing to the window, she threw it open, and let the winter wind sweep through the luxurious room. In spite of her trouble, Amy could not help laughing.

"You were always prejudiced, little sister."

"Instinctively," said Zoe, crossing to her sister's side; and as she did so, she picked up the letter, and carelessly threw it on the sofa. "You are my queen, Amy," she said, placing her hands down like on her sister's brow; "but you are blind!"

Before Amy could question her meaning, Mrs. Langdon came in.

"Mercy! who opened the window!" she exclaimed, as the cold air struck her face.

"I did," Zoe answered, seating herself on the sofa as she spoke.

"Do you want to die, child?"

"I am not afraid to die," answered Zoe, "are you?"

"You are a queer child. Are you ready, Amy?" said the lady with a shudder. "You had better let me take the letter I showed you. Your father may ask for it."

"I don't care," said Amy, wearily. "It is here on the floor, I believe."

But when they came to look for it it was gone, and Zoe sat looking out from under her long lashes wickedly, enjoying her stepmother's anxiety. She had no idea of the importance of the paper she held, nor dreamed of its purport, but, as she said, "it seemed to be instinctive with her to desire to thwart every wish of their stepmother concerning her sister or herself;" and having heard Amy say she "did not care," it was her delight to hide the paper, and became absorbed in her book.

At last they gave up the search, and when they were gone Zoe laughed maliciously to herself, thinking, "I'll see what the letter could be to cause madame's smooth brow to wear such a frown."

When she had finished reading it, she sprang to her feet, her face white with anger.

"The mean wretch! Clark Easton no more wrote that letter than I did; and I'll prove it to Amy, and thwart her evil plans to-night, or my name's not Zoe Langdon."

It was the work of a few moments to change her school dress for one more suitable for evening; then to brush out the bronze brown hair that fell below her waist in waves of burnished gold, and tie it back with scarlet ribbon.

There was evidently no vanity in Zoe's composition, judging from the business-like way in which she tied the hair that made her the envy of many a belle. Ah, Zoe! If you were as free from other passions as from envy, the mother who watches above you might well be proud of her child.

When she was dressed she took the letter in her hand, and then from her writing-desk several other rather dingy-looking scraps of paper, and ran rapidly down the stairs to the reception-room.

It was a brilliant scene, but Zoe's eyes were accustomed to it, and ran rapidly from group to group. Amy was the centre of an admiring circle, and Mrs. Langdon stood not very far from the door, still receiving the late arrivals.

"Who is that little sprite who looks as if she were just from elf-land?" said a lady, who was



leaning against a marble pillar, talking to a young officer.

Captain Easton's sad face brightened as the child came further into the room, and he exclaimed:

"Why, it is my little friend Zoe! If you will excuse me, I will see if I can do anything for her."

A few minutes later Mrs. Langdon's eyes opened wide with astonishment as Zoe passed her on the young officer's arm, her bright face turned laughingly up to his.

"A young debutante!" said the gentleman she was just receiving.

"She does as she pleases," said Mrs. Langdon with an expressive shrug of her shoulders.

Out in the hall, whither she had led her companion, after the circuit of the room, Zoe's manner suddenly changed, and she faced Captain Easton with a dignity that would have been amusing if it had not been so earnest.

"Read that," she said, placing the letter in his hand, "and tell me what you think of it."

He had not read more than a dozen lines before his face told her as much as she wanted to know, and he exclaimed:

"Good heavens, Zoe! where did this come from—do you know?"

She then placed those other scraps in his hand and said:

"Look at these, now, and you will soon see where the letter came from; and you know best, perhaps, why you have such an enemy."

The scraps were the first attempts in copying Captain Easton's handwriting, in the hand of Zoe's stepmother, blown from her window a few mornings previous.

"Wait here a moment now," said Zoe. "I will see you again."

Back through the rooms she sped with a saucy bow or smile from her numerous friends, until she reached her sister's side.

"Please excuse my sister a moment," she said to Amy's partner, and the two went down the long room together, winning many an admiring glance.

Amy was almost wild with apprehension, for her thoughts turned at once to her wild young brother at college.

"What is it, Zoe?" she asked, as they reached the hall.

"Ask Captain Easton," she said. And with a merry laugh, sprang up the stairs, leaving the lovers together.

That night when Amy came up to her room, she knelt beside the bed, and looked long and earnestly at the face of her sleeping sister. In sleep it lost the bitter look and mocking smile that had become habitual to it, and was as purely childlike as when her mother left her parting kiss upon it.

Amy's tears fell like rain upon the unconscious sleeper; and when little Zoe awoke the next morning, she found only two tear-stained notes on her pillow—one for her father and one for herself. Sweet Amy had fled from her father's house as the wife of Clark Easton, the man she loved.

The note to Zoe was long and sorrowful—telling why she had done this, and asking her sister to forgive her for leaving her alone. "But you are stronger than I, and I cannot bear this life any longer." Clark was ordered abroad and Amy would go with him.

The other note contained a simple notification of her flight, that her father might know she had left home honourably.

Zoe did not shed a tear, but there was a strange light in her eyes when she met her father in the hall that morning, and placed the note in his hand. He read it without a trace of emotion in his face, then raised his hand toward Heaven.

But before the words escaped his lips Zoe's hand sealed them. She did not speak a word, but as he looked in her eyes the strong man trembled as with an ague, and lifting her out of his way, passed into the room and locked the door.

There was an insolent triumph in the very sweep of Mrs. Langdon's silk as she passed Zoe

for weeks. If she had not succeeded in making Amy unhappy in one way, she had in another, and driven her almost an outcast from her father's house.

She could have had no object in all her manoeuvres to prevent the marriage but to make Amy miserable, whom she hated for her beauty, which was eclipsing her own. Mr. Langdon had known nothing but what his wife told him, for the estrangement between him and his children was so complete, that he scarcely ever spoke to them on any subject. While he was made to believe that his children were his enemies, they thought that he hardly knew of their existence. So Mrs. Langdon rejoiced in her success.

Zoe said but little, but very often, when the brown lashes suddenly veiled her eyes, could Mrs. Langdon have seen the look hidden thereby, she might have trembled. Zoe knew her power—knew that her father had an almost superstitious reverence for the promise he had made her dead mother concerning her, and knew that whatever she did, she was safe from his active displeasure. Mrs. Langdon knew it, too, and it increased her dislike for the child, while mingled with it was a half-defined fear—a feeling that in some way Zoe was to be the means of harm to her.

And beneath the careless exterior of this child of fifteen was an unflinching purpose, which had grown to be the great aim of her life; that her hand should unveil the arch deceiver to her father's eyes—should show him the serpent he had cherished in his bosom. And the little brown fingers were gathering up evidence, link by link, that was to effect her purpose.

#### CHAPTER V.

So the months drifted by. Zoe heard often from Amy, who was well and happy, so her mind was at rest about her. But she was greatly troubled about her brother, who was, as we have said, at college. Naturally of a wild, restless disposition, chafing against all rules and restraints, more than either of the others, during the past five years Howard had missed his mother's control, and he had fared but ill since he was placed at school. His lightest faults were dwelt upon and magnified by the woman who called herself his mother, so that they became almost crimes in his father's eyes.

In this his second year at the academy, he had been twice threatened with dishonourable expulsion, and each time he was loaded with reproaches and threats, until the naturally tender heart of the boy was almost broken, and then he became hardened and reckless. For weeks Zoe had heard nothing from him, and her heart was heavy with anxiety.

One Sunday evening she went up to her room for her hymn-book, just at dusk; she was going to evening service with one of her young friends who awaited in the parlour. When she entered someone sprang up from the window, and Zoe started back in alarm. But the next moment Howard's arms were around her, and his voice begging her to be calm, not to betray him. Recovering her presence of mind in a moment, she drew him into a seat; and fearing lest her prolonged absence would be noticed, whispered, "Be quiet and wait," and went down-stairs with a wildly-throbbing heart, but calm face and voice.

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting, Jeanie, she said to her friend, "but I have concluded not to go to church."

"Nonsense, Zoe!" said her stepmother. "I see no reason why you should not go."

"I see no reason why I should go when I do not want to," said the girl contemptuously, and followed her friend to the door. Then she went back to her room.

"Oh, Howard!" she almost screamed at sight of him; "what ails you?"

"Expelled, Zoe, at last," was the answer, in a voice utterly unlike the boy's own.

The fact was too terrible for words, and Zoe could only stand gazing at her brother, until he said, huskily:

"For heaven's sake don't look at me like that, Zoe, but tell me what I am to do!"

"Come with me to papa, Howard," said the girl, with the resolution of desperation. "Tell him your story first, before she knows it, and he cannot condemn you so cruelly."

The boy raised his haggard face to his sister's.

"Tell him, Zoe? I tell you, child, before I would go to my father with the story of my disgrace, after the way he has threatened me, I would put this pistol at my head and blow out my worthless brains." And the silver-mounted pocket pistol, pressed against the boy's fevered brow, gleamed in the moonlight. But Zoe's firm hand was upon it, and he resigned it listlessly to her keeping.

While they stood in a painful stillness, distinctly to the ears of both there came the sound of a catlike tread in the hall outside, and the rustle of a trailing silk. Zoe sprang to the door, her eyes blazing with passion, and threw it open; but only the wind rustled the curtains of the window.

"The trail of the serpent is here, Howard," said she, picking up a lace handkerchief that lay at her feet. "And it is too late for you to see our father."

"Give me the pistol, Zoe, and I will end all this trouble," cried the boy. "I have sworn to kill myself rather than be disowned by my father."

Zoe fixed her clear brown eyes upon him.

"Howard—brother," she said, "do you know it is only the coward who calls death to his aid? Are you—a man, with all the world before you, afraid to face that world? Even if papa disowns you, you yet have your future in your own hands."

"I tell you, Zoe, I am not like you. I cannot bear trouble."

And then his voice was lowered, for they again heard footsteps in the hall; this time a firm, decided step, that paused at their door.

"I will see him first, brother," said Zoe; and in another moment she stood face to face with their father.

"Go downstairs, Zoe," he said, roughly throwing the clinging hand from his shoulder. "I will see your brother alone."

"One word, papa," she pleaded; but he almost lifted her aside, and entering the room, locked the door behind him.

Clasping her trembling hands together, still holding the pistol, Zoe crouched by the side of the door, listening to the storm of words that followed—listening till her brain reeled and her heart grew sick, so well she knew the nature of the two. Presently a hand fell on her shoulder.

"Oh, what is it, Zoe?" asked the musical, treacherous voice of her stepmother. "I was so frightened! Your father heard voices in your room. I tried to prevent his coming—"

Zoe sprang up, her eyes blazing with almost the fierceness of insanity.

"Don't touch me, woman, and don't speak to me!" she almost hissed; "or I shall be tempted to kill you! I wonder why I don't, as you stand there gloating over your work!" And the pistol in the girl's hand clicked ominously. "But no, death is too good for you. Your fate is better still, and it is near at hand! Be still now, and listen."

And with supernatural strength the small hand closed over the jewelled fingers, crushing the rings into the fair white flesh, and holding the woman there. They had not long to listen for even then Mr. Langdon's hand was on the latch, and as the door opened his sneering voice was distinctly heard:

"It is all very well to talk of killing yourself, but young men of your stamp scarcely ever rise to that. A life even of beggary is preferred."

With a wild cry Zoe sprang past her father, but too late! The report of the pistol her brother had held in reserve rang through the house, and the bright, handsome boy, with his tender blue eyes and golden hair so like his mother's, his quick, eager mind but yesterday so full of aspirations for the future—his loving, impulsive heart, that even to the last throbbed

with love for the father, who so cruelly misundoubtedly and wronged him—fell lifeless at his father's feet! And his soul—that soul that was so "pure and unspotted from the world" when his mother kissed her boy for the last time, was sent by his own rash hand to the judgment bar of God.

"Who shall answer for his soul?" asked Zoe, lifting her face in its awful icy calm from her dead brother to where stood the two struck dumb with horror. Then she lifted her clasped hands to Heaven.

"Oh God, I pray thee, if thou art the God our mother deemed thee, let thy judgment, swift and sure, fall upon the one most guilty!"

And with this prayer ringing in their ears, in that strange, wild voice, Mr. Langdon, stern and proud to the last, with his guilty, cowering wife, left Zoe alone with her dead.

## CHAPTER VI.

It was a strange household who lived in the stately London mansion after that dreadful night. Mr. Langdon, his friends all said, was strangely broken, since the suicide of his son. The proud form was bent as with a grievous burden; the handsome face was heavily lined with care, and the abundant brown hair thickly sprinkled with grey. Only Zoe, who, in spite of his share in the tragedy that was seared in to brain and heart, yet loved and pitied her father, understood that it was not that alone which was working such a change.

She knew that his faith in the woman he had so loved was shaken to its foundations; that "rumour, with its thousand tongues," was whispering in his ears stories of her falseness, so well proven that he could not doubt them.

And though Zoe's heart ached for him, yet she never faltered for one instant in her determination to unveil the whole vile life of the woman she so hated. Little by little evidence accumulated in her hands, but her father knew that it was through her means that most of it came to him.

Noiselessly but surely as one of the Fates of old the mesh was woven, that was to lay Zoe's enemy at her feet, low in the dust of discovered shame and disgrace.

She knew now what he did not know, that she was dragging his good name with hers through the mire of an intrigue against the government—that it was on the point of being discovered, and that his reputation and even his position were tottering, only needing a breath to overthrow them. Patiently she waited for the last link to come into her hands, before she revealed the whole matter to her father.

Thus passed away the year after Howard's death. Mrs. Langdon, still beautiful, and seemingly popular as ever, after a decent period of mourning, still swept her trailed skirts and carried her diamonds through her beautiful rooms.

Zoe did not go back to school again, and no one questioned why or wherefore. All day long she glided through the gloomy rooms in her sable robes, like a haunting spirit, sending a thrill of dread through her stepmother's heart whenever she crossed her path.

Zoe's young mind grown old in the bitter school of experience, and warped by passion and pain, had come to look upon her revenge as a sacred duty. Will not this woman have her soul also to answer for in the great reckoning day, should it be lost?

One evening, the anniversary of her brother's death, the Langdon mansion was again a blaze of light, and the beautiful hostess queen of the throng assembled there. Zoe was coming wearily down the steps to the library, when a servant, a new hand not yet drilled by his mistress, accosted her.

"Please, Miss Zoe, will you tell me where I can find Mrs. Langdon? I have a note here that the servant said needed attention immediately."

Zoe's eyes sparkled, but her manner was indifferent, as she said:

"Give it to me, Carson, I will deliver it!"

She went on her way slowly, until out of sight, then sped with rapid feet to her father's study door. Though Zoe had fallen greatly in her high ideas of honour, not even to gratify the dominant purpose of her life, would she tamper with the sealed missive; but she knew the old handwriting, she knew intuitively that this letter was the very link she needed to make the whole plot plain to her father; and so she did not hesitate to lay it before him. Stung by jealousy and shame, he did not scruple to tear it open and read it, and as he read his head drooped lower and lower, until it rested on the table, while a deep groan of agony burst from his lips:

"Ruined! ruined! lost!"

"No, papa," said Zoe's clear voice; "not lost. It is not too late to explain all this away. I have taken care of that!"

Mr. Langdon looked up, his face that of an old, old man, and as he met the great pitying eyes of the only child now left to him, he opened his arms, and the next moment father and child were sobbing together in a close embrace.

Long and earnest was their conversation; then Mr. Langdon said:

"I can be glad of all this, now that your love is spared me, my child. Will you tell Mrs. Langdon now, that I wish to see her?"

A few minutes later Mrs. Langdon was considerably startled by the entrance upon the festive scene of a little sombre figure with floating brown hair, who announced to her gravely and distinctly that her husband wished to see her.

What transpired between the outraged husband and his guilty, dishonoured wife Zoe never knew, but two weeks later the Langdon mansion was closed, and the family went back to the old home at Hillside.

Mr. Langdon, though deeply involved by his wife in intrigue and "lobbying," was, in consideration of the extenuating circumstances with which Zoe had kept the authorities cognisant, allowed to resign, and with a broken heart, and mind and health irretrievably shattered, he was glad to return to the quiet of his village home. He clung almost childishly to Zoe, whose triumph and joy were inexpressible.

But when sometimes she was alone in the room that had been her mother's, and looked up at the portrait over the mantel, the angel eyes seemed to reproach her, and try to win her back to softness and gentleness.

But when she looked at another picture on the wall, a brave handsome boy of perhaps ten years, with bold, flashing blue eyes and sunny hair, his arm thrown caressingly around his laughing elfin of a sister, her heart would grow hard again, and her lips could only syllable:

"My brother! my murdered brother!"

Mr. Langdon came from London with a burning fever in his veins that brought him almost down to the river of death, and his delirium showed how all this trouble affected him.

"I have borne it—borne it, Zoe, until it has eaten into my heart," he would say pitifully; but most he talked of Howard and Annie, and with tears in his softened black eyes would beg them for forgiveness.

At last there came a change for the better. Mrs. Langdon had never even asked admittance to her husband's room, and though Amy had been sent for and was there, her own ill-health precluded her affording Zoe any assistance, as she had been so closely confined. On the evening he was pronounced better, she left Amy in the room and ran out for a breath of air. It was dusk, but, as she passed out of the gate, she distinctly saw in the shrubbery the face of the man, with whom her stepmother's name had been dishonourably connected.

Though startled, she pretended not to be aware of his presence, but she knew at once its meaning—knew that her stepmother that night meant to put the finishing touch to her perfidy by an elopement with this man; and she determined to foil her plans.

After sauntering leisurely about for a while,

she met the old family physician at the gate, and entered the house with him. It was the work of but a few moments to put him in possession of the facts of the case, and ask his aid. He remained at the house that night, and at midnight was asleep on a lounge that opened out of the sick man's room.

Zoe, thoroughly wearied, had been betrayed into a light slumber, also, when she was aroused by a rattling among the medicine bottles on the stand by her father's couch, and saw, standing by her father's side, her stepmother, with her husband's night draught in her hands!

Once before Zoe had noticed that the medicine looked peculiar, and following her unerring instinct, had thrown it out; but she had not dreamed of a crime like this. Remembering, in the midst of her horror, that a sudden shock would be fatal to her father's reason, if not to his life, she glided to the woman's side, and while she imprisoned her with her arms, gave the signal that brought the doctor to her side.

In another moment she was a prisoner. She was not allowed a word, nor did she seem to desire to speak; the whole scene was too horrible for words. And when the wretched woman was safely secured in Zoe's mother's room, as the safest place, Zoe turned to look at her father, she found his eyes fixed upon her in a dull, meaningless stare, that showed plainly reason had fled! And for the first time in her life, overcome by horror and agony, Zoe fell fainting to the floor.

When the gray light of morning looked in at the windows of that gloomy room where they had secured the would-be murderers, and the first sunbeam lit up Annie Langdon's fair sweet portrait on the wall, it also fell on the pale dead face of the woman who had supplanted her in her husband's love. Dead! Oh fearful, yet just retribution! by her own hand, in the room where had gone out the saintlike spirit of the other, and where the murdered boy looked down at her with haunting blue eyes!

Mr. Langdon did not die, but reason never returned to its throne, and he never knew all the sin of the woman he had loved so well. Amy and her husband, with their troop of merry children, live at Hillside. Zoe still clings with desperate love to the frail old man who has no life but in hers.

She has asked and obtained pardon for the sin of her past life, if sin it could be called, and she looks with hopeful eyes for the happiness in heaven that was never here on earth. A brooding sadness never leaves her eyes, because of the young spirit sent so rashly to its Maker's presence; but can she help the hope that "God, pitying, forgave?"

And this is one woman's work, and its retribution! For is it not written, "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you," and "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord?" F. S.

## FACETIE.

HANDY.

Scene 1.

LIEUTENANT (to Private, who has been misconducting himself): "Now, if ever I catch you lifting your hand again I'll report you."

Scene 2.

LIEUTENANT: "Why, what the—why, don't you salute?"

PRIVATE: "Shure, and didn't you tell me the other day that if ever yer caught me lifting my hand you'd report me to the colonel."—Fun.

UPON MY WORD!

GUARD: "Now, miss, jump in, train going on."

CHILD: "But I can't go before I have kissed mamma."

GUARD: "Jump in, miss, I'll see to that."

—Fun.

SOME PEOPLE ARE NEVER SATISFIED.

HUSBAND (not altogether au fait on theatrical



topics): "Ulloa! they're not playing 'Our Boys.'"

WIFE (still less in it): "How annoying, to be sure! I had made up my mind to have taken baby to see it if it had only lasted another year or two." —Fun.

#### "MERTIN' ON THE SLY."

(A new version of an old song.)

Gin a nursey meet a bobby,  
Meet him on the sly,  
Gin a nursey leave a bobby,  
Need a bobby cry?

Gin a bobby to a bobby  
Acts in way unkind,  
Need the nursey stop that bobby—  
Need that bobby mind?

Gin a nursey smack a bobby  
With a strength extreme,  
Gin a nursey pinch a bobby,  
Need that bobby scream?

Gin a bobby shake a bobby,  
Need that bobby yell?  
Gin a nursey kiss that bobby,  
Need that bobby tell? —Fun.

#### "A FRIENDLY HINT."

WILLUM: "Not quite so active as you was twenty years ago, Tummas."

TUMMAS: "No, I baint, Willum; I find I can't run up a score lately, but if onybody asks me to 'ave a drink, I jumps at the offer." —Fun.

#### DIRECT TO THE CATTLE SHOW—SHOWING HIM DIRECT.

OLD MAN: "Direct yer to the show? Well, yer just turns round here by the 'White Horse,' past the 'Jolly Anglers,' till yer comes to Jim Steel's beerhouse on the left; then you'll notice another 'ouse just across the road—yer leave that on yer right, and then yer arks again." —Fun.

#### SOMETHING TO WEEP FOR.

HOST (lamenting): "The vintage is a dead failure, and no wine will be got this year."

SYMPATHISING FRIEND: "Ah, it brings the water in one's eyes to think of it; but let's drink to its 'success.'" —Fun.

#### EQUAL TO THE EMERGENCY.

Yes, doctor. If a baby gal  
Should bless my wedded state,  
I will not call her Poll or Sal,  
No, nothing else but Kate.

My sainted aunt was called the same,  
My love for it is great;  
Yes, doctor, that must be her name,  
She shall be christened Kate.

What? Twins! Good gracious, how they squall!

Doctor, bemoan my fate—  
Both girls?—Well, well, I still can call

Them Kate, and Dupli-Kate! —Fun.

#### FROM QUALITY COURT.

Why about Venice all this fuss?  
What has the place to do with us,  
Or its æsthetic trophies?

No need so far abroad to roam;  
We've got our own "St Mark's" at home—

I mean the Trade Marks Office. —Fun.

#### WAISTED INFORMATION.

It is stated that waists trimmed with fur are to be fashionable this winter, and that the style originated on the French stage. This latter piece of intelligence seems rather superfluous, since no one can help seeing that it is a furrin' invention. —Fun.

#### WAKING UP.

PARSON: "Rather drowsy weather this, Farmer Jones."

FARMER J.: "Ay, parson, so it be; minds one o' sermon time, don't it?" —Fun.

A young lady, who resides in Brooklyn, when recently asked if she was a singer, replied that she only sang for her own "amazement."

#### A STRANGE INTRODUCTION.

Nothing annoys a man in life more sadly,

Though perhaps not at trifles you vince,

Than losing a button from off his shirt collar;

And it will not take long to convince

That it's really provoking at all times,

And mostly when out for a ramble;

Maybe, off it comes when you're sneezing,

Or perchance in a little love scramble.

So it chanced I fell in this dilemma

One day when to a pic-nic invited,

And it made me turn cold and then heated—

In fact I was growing excited,

When a maiden so fair as the morning,

Or the flowers bespangled with dew,

Said, "If you stand still for a moment,

Dear sir, I will fix it for you."

So taking from out of her pocket

A mysterious case filled with needles and thread,

I stood up as fixed as a statue

As she laughing said "Hold up your head."

But as she kept stitching and stitching

Her dear fingers they tickled my chin.

And the clouds they all fled from my visage,

The smile on my face turned a grin.

When the torture was over what could I

Do than repay the dear girl with a kiss,

Though she blush'd like a rosebud in summer,

To my joy did not take it amiss.

So our acquaintance soon ripen'd to friendship,

And friendship soon bloomed in bliss,

Yes, thanks to the button that came off,

Which I paid for when sewn with a kiss.

A strange introduction, yet surely,

The sewing and kissing au fait,

Each added fresh zest to the pic-nic

And brightened the rest of the day.

For it's certain a girl that's so thrifty

Will make one the best little wife,

So I gave her the contract, exclusive,

To sew on my buttons for life. O. P.

#### STATISTICS.

THE NATIONAL DEBT OF PRUSSIA.—The total amount of the Prussian national debt, according to the figures laid before the Landtag, is stated at £1,395,389,183 marks (£69,769,454), including the charges to be made up to the fiscal year, March 1, 1880. Of this sum, the railway debt amounts to 829,419,800 marks (£41,475,990), a sum which represents in the main so much productive capital, so that the

unproductive debt is not more than £28,293,464. Of the grand total, the provinces acquired by Prussia after the wars of 1864 and 1866 are accountable for only 88,746,086 marks (£4,437,304), of which 67,841,271 marks (£3,392,063) is represented by railways.

#### HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO PRESERVE EGGS.—Eggs may be preserved for several months by greasing them all over with melted mutton suet and wedging them close together, with the small end downwards, in a box of bran. To keep them for winter use, pour a gallon of boiling water on two quarts of quicklime and half a pound of salt; when cold, mix with it one ounce of cream of tartar, and the following day put in the eggs.

TO DYE HAIR BLACK.—Take sifted lime, sixteen ounces; whitelead, two ounces; litharge in fine powder, one ounce. Mix well together and keep dry. When required for use, mix a little powder with water to the consistency of cream, and apply carefully with a sponge.

A HEALING OINTMENT.—Put a little pure beeswax in a pipkin, and add some fine olive oil; as it melts, add more, till the mixture assumes the consistency of butter. This is good for abraded flesh cuts, chilblains, or any broken surface, which requires to be healed, not drawn.

HOW TO DYE CLOTH ROYAL BLUE.—For fifteen yards of cloth three and a half pounds of super-sulphate of tartar, three and a half pounds of prussiate of potash, two pounds ten ounces of logwood, three and a half quarts of royal blue spirits, three and a half pints of muriate of tin. Put the prussiate and tartar into a boiler containing one hundred gallons of water, after melting them in a little warm water; put in the extract from the logwood, boiled beforehand, and half of the blue spirits. Enter the cloth cool, then heat to 120 Fahrenheit; put in the remainder of the blue spirit; return and boil for fifteen minutes; lift, cool, and put in the muriate of tin; return, boil fifteen minutes, lift, wash, and dry.

WHITAKER'S ALMANACK.—We have received a copy of this old and valued friend. After glancing through its contents we are glad to notice that in every way the merits of past years are upheld.

CARD TRICKS MADE EASY.—Amongst the numerous publications by Messrs. Warne is a bijou book by Professor Hoffmann, author of "Modern Magic," &c., which without sleight of hand makes magic easy of performance. There are 31 tricks with cards plainly described, and 10 with counters.

MR. GLADSTONE at Dalmeny, replying in a playful speech to the toast of his health proposed by Lord Rosebery, and alluding to the many presents he had received from deputations and representatives of various industries, observed that he had not only been housed and fed but clothed, having received from various quarters a complete suit of clothes with the exception of hat and boots. "That," said Lord Rosebery quickly, "is an omission that must be remedied." And so it was, when Mr. Gladstone left Dalmeny next day he carried in his portmanteau a splendid Glengarry cap and a pair of strong boots, completing his Scotch outfit.

"WHAT one girl can do" is the subject of a recent magazine article. But we needn't read it to learn what one girl can do. The field is so broad that she can do most anything, from absorbing sweets to squeezing a number three shoe on to a number seven foot. Just to show what one girl can do we might mention the fact that a girl eloped last week, was divorced, re-married, and returned home with her second husband, and all in less than three days. No, reader, you can't tell what one girl can do, and the field of woman's action is daily becoming larger.

## CONTENTS.

Page.	Page.
ROB ROY MACGREGOR; OR, THE HIGHLAND CHIEFTAIN ... 217	CORRESPONDENCE ... 240
BARGAIN AND SALE ... 220	No.
LITTLE DUTIES ... 220	
HOME ATTRACTIONS ... 220	
TWICE REJECTED; OR, THE NAMELESS ONE ... 221	UNDER A LOVE CHARM; OR, A SECRET WRONG, commenced in ... 224
DRAWING HIM OUT ... 223	THE FORCED MAR- riage; OR, JEW AND GENTILE, commenced in ... 225
A NEW YEAR'S STORY MARRIAGE ... 224	LINKED LOVES com- menced in ... 225
LINKED LOVES ... 225	TWICE REJECTED; OR, THE NAMELESS ONE commenced in ... 226
UNDER A LOVE CHARM; OR, A SECRET WRONG, commenced in ... 229	THE FORCED MAR- riage; OR, JEW AND GENTILE ... 232
THE FORCED MAR- riage; OR, JEW AND GENTILE ... 232	HIS SECOND WIFE ... 236
HIS SECOND WIFE ... 236	FACTS ... 239
STATISTICS ... 239	MISCELLANEOUS ... 239
MISCELLANEOUS ... 239	HOUSEHOLD TRAM- BLES ... 239

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

[In our next issue will be commenced a new serial story, entitled, "Aileen's Love Story," by the author of "Christine's Revenge; or, O'Hara's Wife," "The Mystery of His Love; or, Who Married Them?" "Under a Love Charm; or, a Secret Wrong," &c.

ANNIE W.—We shall not burden ourselves with the responsibility of deciding your duty in the matter before us before the gentleman has formally offered himself; but we advise you not to throw yourself at his feet. He may be only making love to your friend through you.

LEILA.—1. Whatever excuse he might make, he has not behaved in a straightforward, honourable, or manly way, and our advice to you is, do not take any notice of him. 2. Unless you particularly wish to become acquainted with the gentleman it is not necessary to invite him to call upon you; it would not be impolite if you did not invite him.

ANXIOUS.—Your story would probably be contradicted in court should you sue for a divorce, and the sympathies of a jury would be apt to be with the lady. You should consult your parents and friends, and some discreet lawyer.

R. T.—As you state the case, he did not do right, but if you spoke to him about it he could perhaps supply facts that would put quite a different face upon the matter.

M. G. W.—You should first read your father's will carefully, and learn just exactly what its provisions are, and what powers your uncle has in the matter. Then, if you have any sensible business friend, ask his advice. He would be able to advise you, and could introduce you to his lawyer should it be found necessary to take legal proceedings.

HARRY.—1. Momus was in the Greek mythology the god of mockery and fault-finding, for which he was driven from the society of the gods. 2. St. Macarius was an Egyptian anchorite, whose name is linked with the "Dance of Death."

EDMUND.—It is always the province of a lady to recognise a gentleman, and he cannot properly speak to her until she authorises him.

C. L. B.—Fair education, good address, and trained elocution, the power of imitation, with good memory and good taste, are needed to become an actor. The training is variously obtained. You could probably obtain information by a personal application to some of the theatrical managers.

MARGUERITE S.—1. Try rosewater, three ounces, sulphate of zinc, one drachm; mix. Wet the face with it, gently dry it, and then dab it over with cold cream, which also dry gently off. 2. At any hairdresser's, price about 1s.

L'EMERALD.—1. Your poem does you credit, but it is not up to our standard for publication. 2. Handwriting plain, but formal. 3. We make no charge for the insertion of matrimonial advertisements.

S. P. G.—We do not think the circumstances on which you rely as evidences of the "disgraceful" element prove your case. The assumption is, on the large scale, that the man who has to take such occupations as you specify is something other than his employer in education, habits, feeling, and so on, so that to neither the one nor the other would association, say at table, be any addition to comfort. But disparity in advantages is not disgrace. On the contrary, let there be self-respect, intelligence, and integrity, and the lowliest labourer commands the respect of all to whom he is known. Labour is of many kinds. The forms you specify are not the hardest. Surgeons, lawyers, and some artists labour more than gardeners or stablemen, but they do not go to anyone's table. Labour, and living by it, does not disqualify them. Why? The kind of labour they do implies intelligence, education, and so forth, so that close association between them and their employers is not uncomfortable to either party.

TWO GUNS AND THREE GUNS, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Two Guns is twenty-one, good-looking, brown eyes, dark Three Guns is twenty-two, auburn hair, hazel eyes, fair fond of music.

LUCY M., fair, tall, brown hair, hazel eyes, thoroughly domesticated, would like to correspond with a respectable tradesman.

R. J. S., twenty-six, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

WILLI, twenty-two, handsome, dark hair, blue eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a good-looking young lady.

PART WALKER, ELEVATOR, and SPANISH JACK, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies. Part Walker is twenty-two, tall, handsome, fond of children. Elevator is twenty-one, fond of dancing. Spanish Jack is nineteen, fond of children.

TED and WILLIAM, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Ted is twenty-one, medium height, dark. William is twenty-three, tall, fair.

SARAH ANN, eighteen, a domestic servant, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-two. She is loving, fond of home and children.

SPURGE MAIR BRACE, twenty-two, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about his own age.

JIMBOOM and SEA ROASTER, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Jimboom is medium height, blue eyes, fair, of a loving disposition. Sea Roaster is fond of music, dark, medium height.

JOHN and M. H., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. John is twenty-two, tall, fair. M. H. is twenty-four, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition.

## NAMING THE BABY.

They gather in solemn council,  
The chiefs in the household band;  
They sit in the darkened chamber,  
A conclave proud and grand;  
They peer in the curtained chamber,  
And each with one voice exclaim,  
As they point to the new found treasure,  
"The baby must have a name."

They bring forth the names by dozens  
With many an anxious look;  
They scan all the tales and novels,  
They search through the good Old Book;  
Till the happy-voiced young mother,  
Now urging her prior claim,  
Cries out in the fondest accents,  
"Oh! give him a pretty name."

"His grandma was Ebenezer,  
Long lived and gone, dear soul,"  
Says the treasured voice of grandma,  
As the quill drops roll.  
"Oh, call him Eugene Augustus,"  
Cries the youngest of the throng;  
"Plain John," says the happy father,  
"Is an honest name and strong."

And thus the embryo statesman,  
Or, perhaps, the soldier bold,  
Respecting his future title  
Left utterly out in the cold;  
And yet it can matter but little  
To him who is heedless of fame,  
For no name will dishonour the mortal,  
If the mortal dishonours the name. H. H.

LEILA W., ANNIE LAURIE, and KATE, three friends, would like to correspond with three gentlemen. Leila is twenty, brown hair, blue eyes, dark, fond of music and dancing. Annie is twenty-two, auburn hair, blue eyes, fond of home and music. Kate is twenty-one, fair, tall, fond of music and children.

HARRY, FRANCIS, and AMERICAN, three seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Harry is twenty-five, dark, medium height, and fond of children. Francis is twenty-two, light hair, blue eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition. American is twenty-one, black hair and eyes fond of music and dancing.

SARAH JANE and JEMIMA ANNE, two friends, would like to correspond with two petty officers in the Royal Navy with a view to matrimony. Sarah Jane is twenty-one, dark hair and eyes, loving, fond of home and children. Jemima Anne is nineteen, tall, black hair, blue eyes, and of a loving disposition. Respondents must be between twenty-one and twenty-five.

DAN DABBY, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen, tall, fair, of a loving disposition.

G. R. W., twenty, brown eyes, fair, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen.

JACK, twenty-two, a seaman in the Royal Navy, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen.

LILY, ROSA, and EDITH, three friends, would like to correspond with three seamen in the Royal Navy. Lily is twenty-three, loving. Rosa is twenty, fond of home and music. Edith is eighteen, fond of dancing and music. Respondents must be from twenty-four to forty-four, good-tempered.

FLORENCE and ANGELINA H., two friends, would like to correspond with two tradesmen. "Florence is eighteen, fair. Angelina is twenty-one, dark, tall.

PERCUSSION FUSE, TORPEDO, and MAINYARD, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Percussion Fuse is twenty-one, good-looking, fond of children. Torpedo is twenty-two, dark, fond of music and dancing. Mainyard is twenty-three, dark, blue eyes, and fond of children.

BLANCHE and MARIE, cousins, would like to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Blanche is twenty-one, good-looking. Marie is nineteen, pretty. Each have £2 per week. Respondents must be in good positions.

W. J. W. and L. G., two friends, wish to correspond with two young ladies about twenty. Residents of Newcastle preferred.

GEORGE, WILLIE, and WALTER, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies. George is twenty-three, medium height, good-looking. Willie is twenty-four, dark, medium height, curly hair. Walter is twenty-one, fair.

LAURA and EVA, two friends, would like to correspond with two tall, dark gentlemen. Laura is twenty, good-looking, dark hair and eyes, medium height, fond of home and music. Eva is fair, domesticated, good-looking, fond of home.

LIEKIN L., twenty-one, tall, fair, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-four with a view to matrimony.

LOUIE and CLARICE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Louie is eighteen, loving, fair, fond of home. Clarice is twenty, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be about twenty-five, dark.

ALF and BOB, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Alf is twenty-two, brown hair, hazel eyes, good-looking, of medium height, dark, fond of home and children. Bob is twenty-three, of a loving disposition, dark, hazel eyes, fond of dancing.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

R. G. B. is responded to by—Frances L., nineteen, tall, brown hair, hazel eyes, fond of home, thoroughly domesticated, loving.

ETHEL by—Jack, twenty-two, fair, dark hair and eyes, loving, fond of home and music.

HILDA by—Tom, twenty, medium height, of a loving disposition, dark, blue eyes, good-looking, tall, fond of home and music.

BEATRICE by—Tradesman, twenty, tall, fair, fond of home and music.

JAMES P. by—Annette, eighteen, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children.

CHRISTINA by—Augustus W.

BEATRICE by—Edward.

GEORGE by—Millicent, twenty, dark hair and eyes, tall, thoroughly domesticated, of a loving disposition, fond of children.

JASMINE by—Walter, nineteen.

NORTHERN EAGLE by—Dewdrop, eighteen, golden hair medium height, fond of music and dancing.

MAY by—Rob Roy, tall, dark.

REDMOND by—Adelaide, eighteen, fair, grey eyes, fond of home, of a loving disposition; and by—Florrie T., seventeen, tall, light hair, hazel eyes, fond of music, loving, domesticated.

VIOLLET by—Thomas E., twenty-three, light brown hair blue eyes, medium height.

LILIAN by—Life Belt, twenty-two, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition.

ALL the Back Numbers, Parts, and Volumes of THE LONDON READER are in print, and may be had at the Office, 334, Strand; or will be sent to any part of the United Kingdom Post Free for Three-halfpence, Eightpence, and Five Shillings and Eightpence each.

THE LONDON READER, Post Free, Three-halfpence Weekly; or Quarterly One Shilling and Eightpence.

LIFE and FASHION, Vols. 1 to 2, Price Seven Shillings and Sixpence each.

EVERYBODY'S JOURNAL, Parts 1 to 4, Price Threepence each.

\* \* Now Ready, Vol. XXXIII. of THE LONDON READER, Price 4s. 6d.

Also the TITLE and INDEX to Vol. XXXIII., Price One Penny.

NOW READY, the CHRISTMAS (DOUBLE) PART (Parts 204, 205), containing EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER, with Complete Stories, Illustrated. Price One Shilling, by post One Shilling and Fourpence.

N.B.—Correspondents must Address their Letters to the Editor of THE LONDON READER, 334, Strand, W.C.

\*† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily authors should retain copies.

London: Published for the Proprietors at 334, Strand—by A. SMITH & CO.